Saint Mary's
OLLEGE LIBRARY

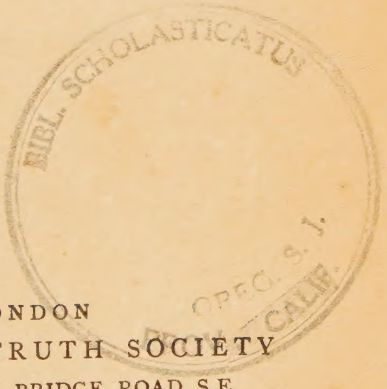
reDame Indiana
SEDES·SAPIENTIAE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/lecturesonhistor0002vari

LECTURES ON
THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

VOLUME II



LONDON
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY
69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, S.E.
1910

L47
v.2

31298

CONTENTS

THE GREAT KINGS
By the Rt. Rev. Dr L. C. CASARTELLI

THE AVESTA
By Prof. A. CARNOY

ANCIENT GREECE
By J. HUBY, S.J.

THE ATHENIAN PHILOSOPHERS
By HENRY BROWNE, S.J.

EARLY ROME
By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

IMPERIAL ROME
By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

ANCIENT KING-WORSHIP
By C. LATTEY, S.J.

MITHRA
By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

JUN 2 '88

THE RELIGION OF THE GREAT KINGS[1]

By the Right Rev. Dr L. C. Casartelli,
Bishop of Salford

The Iranians

The name Iran is a convenient term employed by modern scholars to designate the various lands of Central Asia, which at one time or another formed part of the great Persian Empire of antiquity. It is in reality the modern Persian name for modern Persia itself: in fact, it represents the Zend name Airyāna, or Land of the Aryans, a title which the old Persic peoples, as well as the ancient Indians, were proud to bear. Similarly the various kindred races, Medes, Persians, Bactrians, Parthians, etc., who belong to these lands, are conveniently included under the term "Iranians," by way of distinction from their sister races, the Indians, with whom they had a common origin, a common primitive religion, and at their beginnings a common speech.

It is well known what an important part the Iranians played in ancient history. The empire of the Medes, the first Iranian race to rise to political eminence, proved itself more than a match for the later Assyrio-Babylonian empire. Cyrus the Great, the chief of another Iranian people, the Persians proper, overthrew the Median supremacy and established that great Persian Empire which eventually

[1] A lecture delivered at the University of Manchester.

absorbed the whole of the civilised East and even Egypt itself. The historic struggle between the great Persian monarchy and the Greek republics is familiar to all as the central crisis of Ancient History. The climax of that great epic contest was, of course, the triumph of Alexander the Great, his ephemeral Asiatic empire, and the consequent extension through the whole East of the Hellenic culture. But the Iranian power, both political and intellectual, survived. The mighty Parthian Empire was the lifelong rival of that of Rome; it was the only great power which the Roman Empire never succeeded in conquering. Its successor, the Sassanian Empire, also a native monarchy, was able to hold its own for centuries against the Byzantine power, only to succumb before the all-conquering might of Islam, which was destined eventually to absorb also the rival empire of Constantinople.

The Iranian Religion

Thus the Iranians have played a conspicuous and glorious part in the history of the world during the six centuries before Christ and the six centuries after Christ. They contributed, according to the common calculation, two, if not three, to the great empires of antiquity. A race which has played such a part on the stage of history must needs have been one exceptionally gifted with moral and intellectual powers; and consequently the question of the religious beliefs and philosophy of such a race must necessarily be of extreme interest and importance in the history of human thought. What do we know concerning this topic? Strange to say, although the information from both native and foreign sources is very abundant, yet there is a peculiar difficulty which embarrasses us in answering the question. Speaking generally, we can say without hesitation

that the ancient Iranians during their historic career possessed the most perfect religious system of all the nations known to us outside of the revealed religion of the Old and New Testaments—a religion practically monotheistic in a broad sense, with doctrines concerning the Deity and His relations to His creation scarcely differing from our own, with a complete moral code of great reasonableness and undoubted elevation, and a spirituality that avoids the excesses of many Eastern mysticisms, and has much affinity with the Christian. Secondly, we can also say that this religious system may be correctly designated by the term Mazdeism, or the cult of the One Supreme Being, God and Creator, known as Mazda, or Ahura Mazda, or Auramazda — forms represented by the Greek, and later, name Ormazd.

But it is here that our difficulty and embarrassment begin. For of this Mazdean religious system we possess two entirely distinct presentments—distinct in form, in character, probably also in date; and our great difficulty—a difficulty which, so far, no scholar has solved—is to correlate these two presentments. Let us explain.

The dates and history of the Achaemenid dynasty, the "Great Kings" of Ancient Persia, are now well and fully known to us. Most of these kings have left inscriptions, cut in the solid rocks, narrating the various exploits of their reigns, and incidentally containing no small amount of information concerning their religious beliefs. Note that these inscriptions are strictly contemporary and original documents, incapable of alteration or corruption by copyists like ordinary MSS. Also that their language is known as Old Persian, and is very closely akin to the Sanskrit of India.

On the other hand, we have a whole literature, consisting of a sacred book, or collection of books (the Avesta), something like our Bible, in a language

closely akin to, but differing sensibly from, that of the royal inscriptions (incorrectly but conveniently called Zend), and also of a very considerable body of later literature, mostly made up of translations of the aforesaid Scriptures and of works explanatory of or based upon them, in a much later language, known as Pahlavi. This literature also embodies a presentment of Mazdeism, and is indeed exclusively occupied with it. But the difficulty is in this, that it is impossible to identify absolutely the Mazdeism of the Avesta with the Mazdeism of the Inscriptions. The difficulty, indeed, is so great that we have felt obliged to treat the religious system of the Avesta in a separate pamphlet and to devote the present one exclusively to that of the Persian kings.

The Avesta knows nothing of these great Persian monarchs, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and the other names, so familiar in history, of the Achaemenid dynasty. It knows, on the contrary, other great dynasties, the Peshdadian and the Kayanian, utterly unknown outside of the Avestic literature and the poetic legends of later Persia. The Avesta also is cognisant of quite other lands of ancient Iran than Persia—chiefly Bactria and Media.

Again, the Avestic system is professedly the reform of a great philosopher and prophet, Zarathushtra, known to us under the Greek form of Zoroaster, and as closely identified with the Avestan Mazdeism as Sakyamuni with Buddhism, or Mohammed with Islam. His name occurs in every part, almost in every sentence, of the sacred books. Yet in the whole range of the royal inscriptions there is not the slightest allusion in any shape or form to the existence of the Prophet, which, if the royal Mazdeism were identical with the Avestan, would be as incredible as to imagine the inscriptions of King Asoka in India without the least mention of the Buddha.

Once more, the leading characteristic of the

Avestan system is what is known as its "dualism"—that is to say, its fundamental doctrine of the existence of two supreme spirits, the Good Creator and the Evil Creator (Ahura Mazda and Angro Mainyus, Ormazd and Ahriman),[1] and the sempiternal conflict between them and their respective armies of creatures and followers. Now, of Angro Mainyus himself neither name nor indication occurs in the inscriptions, nor is there the faintest reference to the "dualistic system" above described. Once more this would seem as incredible as if in Asoka's inscriptions there should be no reference to the wheel of existence or the delivery from it by the attainment of Nirvana.

Lastly, whilst the exact dates of the royal inscriptions are accurately known, that of the Avesta is still a battleground between scholars, whose estimates, even now, vary within a range of not less than one thousand years.

For these reasons then it is not only impossible to identify the Mazdeism of the Avesta with the Mazdeism of the Achaemenid inscriptions, but, so far as I can see, nobody has yet succeeded in establishing even a plausible correlation of the two forms of what, to a certain extent, at least, may be denominated one and the same religious system.

Was the Avestan system anterior to that of the "Great Kings"? Is the religion of the latter a simplified form of the former? Does the royal Mazdeism represent an older and simpler system, whilst Zoroastrianism is a more complicated and elaborated form of an earlier system, owing its origin to the personality of the great Prophet? Did the two systems grow up independently in different parts of Iran, say one in the south, the other in the north? Have both, or has one or the other, been modified by contact with the

[1] The question of the Avestic dualism, which is denied and explained away by modern Parsis and even some European scholars, will be more fully discussed in the pamphlet on the Avesta, pp. 14, 18.

religions of their Semitic neighbours? These are questions for which, I confess, I can find no satisfactory solution in all the various theories propounded by scholars, both native and occidental. The answer to the enigma will, no doubt, come some day; for the present, we must be content to place the facts concerning the two presentments of Iranian Mazdeism separately before the reader, and abstain from formulating another rash theory that may eventually have to be abandoned.

Two historical facts, however, may be considered as ascertained. The first is that both the Mazdeism of the Avesta and the Mazdeism of the Inscriptions have a background of an original religion of nature-worship, closely akin to, or rather identical with, that of Vedic India, and of which the Mazdean systems were either a natural evolution (according to some writers) or a deliberate and conscious reformation. For the Avesta the evidence, which is exceedingly abundant, will be partly noted in Lecture 10, pp. 12, 13, 21, etc. For the religion of the "Great Kings," the much slenderer evidence which we possess will be found below under § 3.

A second important fact is that Zoroaster was anterior in date by at least the greater part of a century to Darius; for the latest date that has been proposed, with very considerable probability, as I think, by West, and supported by other authorities, places the career of the Iranian prophet between 660 and 583 B.C., while Darius began to reign in 522 and died in 485 B.C.

On the other hand, it is pretty certain that the only parts of the Avesta which may be attributed to Zoroaster himself, or at least to his lifetime, are those hymns, psalms, or metrical sermons known as the Gāthās, whilst the other parts of the Sacred Book are very much later in date, in some cases, probably later than the Achaemenid dynasty itself. The much

St. Mary's Library Notre Dame Ind.

more archaic form of the Gathic Zend is sufficient proof of this.

From the above considerations it has been plausibly argued that the Zoroastrian Mazdeism was flourishing in some part or other of Northern Iran, whether Media to the west or Bactria to the east, a century or more before the rise of the Persian Empire, and that it was the great Darius who first introduced this monotheistic form of religion into Persia proper as a State religion, displacing the pre-existing paganism or nature-worship. Another and somewhat similar theory supposes that Mazdeism had existed long before in the Persian empire, but had been corrupted, if not suppressed, under the Assyrian rule, and that Darius's action was rather that of reformation or restoration. A recent native Parsi scholar expresses this view as follows: "The religion in which Darius believed appears to be Zoroastrianism, religion which teaches Ahura Mazda as the Supreme Being, whose divine favour the king acknowledges. In one place the king states that on ascending the throne he had to weed out some wrong religious practices that had crept in before his time [?].[1] This shows that Zoroastrianism must have begun hundreds of years before him, because a new religion is always in full vigour for several centuries following [?], and it is after a long time only that evil practices take root in the nation. Darius says that he had to reform the religion. It means that the religion was not founded in his time, but probably some centuries before him. There is also another reason for believing that the religion was in a degenerated state in the time of Darius. As it has been said before, the Assyrians and the Medes had intercepted the Persian rule, and, as they were Anti-Zoroastrians, Zoroastrianism might have been found in a changed form when Darius ascended the throne. This historical fact proves Darius's own state-

[1] There is no trace of such a statement in the inscriptions.

ment of having tried to bring back the religion to its original form."[1] I do not myself subscribe to this theory, but I give it as a specimen of one of the several ingenious solutions which have been proposed for the difficulty which faces us. Furthermore, it is precisely the Gāthic or earliest part of the Avesta with which the royal religion has the least agreement.

The Great Kings

The "Great Kings" of Persia, that is to say, those of the Achaemenid dynasty, founded by Cyrus the Great, and lasting from B.C. 558 to B.C. 330, are well known to us from the Greek historians, and also from the Old Testament. Indeed Cyrus himself is spoken of in the book of Isaias as the Anointed of the Lord and as His Shepherd.[2] These mighty monarchs, whose dominion in the times of their greatest splendour extended over the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, as well as over Egypt, and was finally overthrown by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, formed what is known in history as the Fifth Great Monarchy of antiquity. The Greek writers, especially Herodotus, have preserved to us a certain meagre amount of information concerning the religion professed by these Persian kings: for instance, that they had neither statues, altars, nor temples for their gods, that they sacrificed to Zeus on the summit of mountains, as well as to the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and winds; that they also honour a *goddess* called Mithra, borrowed from the Assyrians; that their sacrifice took the form of the slaying and the cutting into pieces of animals, and that such sacrifices cannot be offered without the assistance of one of the *Magi*. Moreover, the

[1] R. H. Mistri, *Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism*, pp. 17–18. Bombay, 1906.

[2] Isaias xlv. 1 and xliv. 28.

Greek writer expressly states that falsehood was in the eyes of the Persians the greatest of sins, and likewise mentions their horror of defiling rivers. Elsewhere Herodotus asserts that the Persians honoured fire as a god, and hence were not allowed to burn dead bodies. Certain other details are added by later Greek writers, such as Xenophon and Strabo.

The great discoveries of the nineteenth century have, however, put us in possession of a far ampler knowledge of the ancient Persian religion, and that, we may say, from the very hands of the old Persians themselves. These great monarchs, in imitation of their Babylonian and Assyrian forerunners, were in the habit of inscribing records of their reigns, and especially of their wars and conquests, in great inscriptions deeply chiselled on the face of mighty rocks, which had been planed and smoothed for the purpose.[1] These inscriptions are carved in a peculiar script made up of combinations of small figures very like arrow-heads or wedges, hence called *cuneiform* or *wedge-shaped*. For many centuries these inscriptions remained a sealed book, till the genius of the English officer Rawlinson, who copied them accurately at the risk of his life, in 1835, and that of the German scholar Grotefend, who first discovered the key to their interpretation, eventually led to their being completely edited and translated by a succession of scholars even to our own day. We are thus in complete possession

[1] I subjoin a list of the Achaemenid kings (*i.e.* descendants of Achaemenes, whose real name in Old Persian was Hakhamanish). Those marked with an asterisk are kings whose inscriptions are still extant:—

	B.C.		B.C.
*Cyrus the Great	549	Sogdianos	425
Cambyses	429	Darius II. (Nothos)	425
*Darius I.	522	*Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon)	404
*Xerxes I.	485	*Artaxerxes III. (Ochus)	361
*Artaxerxes I.	465	Darius III. (Kodomannos)	336
Xerxes II.	425		

For convenience these names are given in their familiar Greek form.

of all the contents of these wonderful documents, and can deduce from them not only the historical, but also the religious, cultural, and economic information which they preserve concerning Ancient Persia in the very handwriting (if such an expression can be used) of the ancient Persians themselves. In the following pages I present a brief summary of the religious system, both dogmatic and moral, as deduced from the royal inscriptions. They are indeed but sparse and meagre documents; yet they form the only "literature" (if the term may be permitted) which we possess of Achaemenid times.[1]

As we have above remarked, the Persian cuneiform inscriptions are in a language closely akin

[1] I have thought fit, in this tract, to quote the cuneiform inscriptions in accordance with the system adopted by the recent writers, Weissbach and Bang, in the new edition of their work, entitled *Die altpersischen Keilinschriften, erste Lieferung* (Assyriologische Bibliothek, herausgegeben von Friedrich Delitzsch und Paul Haupt, x. 1). Leipzig: Henrichs, 1893.

The following is an explanatory table of those abbreviations:—

Inscription.	King.	Date B.C.	Place.	Old System.
Dar. Bh.	Darius	522–485	Behistan	Bb.
Dar. Pers. *a*	,,	,,	Persepolis	B.
Dar. Pers. *d*	,,	,,	,,	H.
Dar. Pers. *e*	,,	,,	,,	I.
Dar. N.R.	,,	,,	Naksh-i-Rustem	N.R.
Dar. Elv.	,,	,,	Elvend	O.
Dar. Sz.	,,	,,	Suez	Sz.
Xerx. Pers. *a*	Xerxes I.	485–465	Persepolis	D.
Xerx. Pers. *b*	,,	,,	,,	A.
Xerx. Pers. *c*	,,	,,	,,	C.
Xerx. Pers. *d*	,,	,,	,,	E.
Xerx. Elv.	,,	,,	Elvend	F.
Art. Sus.	Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon)	404–361	Susa	S.
Art. Pers.	Artaxerxes III. (Ochus).	361–338	Persepolis	P.

No mention is made of other inscriptions, as they will not be quoted.

to the Sanskrit of Ancient India, and which it is agreed to designate as "Old Persian." It is still more closely akin to the language in which is written the Avesta, or Sacred Books of the Zoroastrian religion, and which in England and France is commonly designated by the convenient, though inaccurate, name Zend; in Germany and elsewhere it is simply styled Avestic.[1]

Small and monotonous as is this "literature," it is distinguished by the deeply religious note that rings throughout, incessantly repeating the declaration of a burning faith, in which we have evidence of a sincere piety shown to the "great God," the one God of the king and of his people. No question can be raised as to the religion professed by these kings, at least Darius and his successors, for we find that Darius, in the great Behistan inscription, adopts with the sense of the deepest satisfaction the title of "Auramazdean" —proudly declaring:

"As an Auramazdean I swear (? or proclaim) that this is true."

"*Vathiya Auramazdiya taiyiya*[2] *yathā ima hashiyam.*" (Dar. Bh., col. 4, § 56.)

I have just alluded to the faith professed "*at least* by Darius," for in the case of Cyrus there exists a doubt. I shall not stay to discuss the point as to whether this king was really a monotheist. It will be enough for my purpose to state that the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions of that famous conqueror portray him rather as a polytheist, inasmuch as he proclaims himself to the Babylonians the servant and the worshipper of the Assyrio-Babylonian gods, such

[1] The following examples will briefly indicate the relationship of the three tongues :—

Sanskrit	*Old Persian*	*Zend*
aham	adam	azem
rita	arta	asha
Asura	Aura	Ahura

[2] A doubtful term : perhaps *maiyiya.* Tolman reads quite differently.

as Merodach, Bel and Nebo. This—it may at least be supposed—was done in order to please his new subjects, and to gain the favour of the powerful sacerdotal body.[1] The matter, however, is of little importance, since the sole Persian inscription of Cyrus we possess consists of but four words bearing his name and kingly titles. It is with the second of his successors, viz. Darius, the true founder of the dynasty, that the inscriptions really begin. The following, then, are the principal bearings of these inscriptions in so far as they refer to religion.

§ 1. God.—The Divine Names

The generic name used to signify God is *baga*, a term commonly to be found in all languages of Aryan origin. It appears as *bhaga* in Sanskrit, where it is applied to the gods of the Veda. It is also met with (rarely) in the Zend *bagha*, god; in the Slavonic *bagu* (Russian, *Bog*), and under the form of an adjective in Phrygian, in (Ζεὺς) βαγαῖος, as well as in Armenian as *bagin*, which signifies the altar of a pagan divinity. Lastly, we come across it in the name of the town of Bagdad (the city "created by God").

On the other hand, the specific name of the Supreme God is *Auramazda*, the divine name which we find that the "Great Kings" are fond of repeating in their inscriptions. In fact, this name is met with at least 114 times, and frequently twice or thrice in the same sentence. As may be seen, this name is nothing less than that of the God of the Avesta, viz. Ahura Mazda. West, in a very interesting paper,[2] calls attention to the fact that the divine title invariably appears in the cuneiform inscriptions as a single word (*Auramazda*), while in the Avesta the two parts of

[1] See A. H. Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, pp. 498–507. 2nd edition. London, 1894.

[2] See *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xxii. 1890, p. 508.

which it is composed are distinct one from the other (*Ahura Mazda*, two words), each one retaining its proper inflexion (*e.g.* acc. *Ahurem Mazdâm*; gen. *Ahurahē Mazdāo*; dat. *Ahurāi Mazdâi*, etc.). Sometimes, and especially in the Gāthās, the two terms are transposed, thus: *Mazda Ahura*, and in some cases separated by other words; in fact, one or other of the terms alone is sometimes made use of to signify the Supreme Divinity. From these data, West inferred that the Avesta (at least the Gāthās) was antecedent to the cuneiform inscriptions, wherein the form is already determined and the elements fused into a single word. The inference is ingenious, yet I must point out that in a Persepolis inscription of Darius—which, by the way, did not escape West's notice—the divine name is once expressed by the single term *Aura*:

"A blessing will descend . . . . by Aura." "*Shiyātish . . . Aurā nirasātiy.*"

(Dar. Pers. E., § 3.)

Again, in an inscription of Xerxes—consequently later than those of Darius—the two parts are found distinct, and with a separate inflexion, as in the Avesta, thus:

"By the will of Auramazda." "*Vashnā Aurahya Mazdāha.*"

(Xerx. Pers. C, § 3.)

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the Old Persian inscriptions and the Zend of the Avesta were not identical languages, but really two distinct dialects, or sister tongues. This should suffice to explain a difference in the use of this word.

§ 2. The Divine Attributes.—Omnipotence, Omniscience

"Auramazda is the great god." "*Baga vazraka Auramazdā.*"

Just as on earth the Persian king is the "Great King":

"I am the Great King." — "*Adam Khshāyathiya vazraka.*" (Dar. Nr., etc., *passim.*)

More than this, he is the greatest of the gods:

"*Mathishta bāgānam.*" (Xerx. Elv., Dar., Sz., etc.)

This great god is *all powerful* by his will (or rather, grace, *Vashnā*, from the root *vas*, Zend and Sanskrit, to will).

By this will, or divine grace, kings are allowed to reign ("per me reges regnant"); thus Darius exclaims:

"By the will of Auramazdā I am King." — "*Vashnā Auramazdāha adam Khshāyathiya.*" (Dar. Bh., col. 1, §§ 5, 6, etc.)

By this same will the nations are made subject to him:

"By the will of Auramazda, these nations have become my slaves and my tributaries." — "*Vashnā Auramazdāha (imā dahyāva) manā bādaka āhāta manā bājim abarātā.*" (*Ib.*, § 7.)

It is he who gives to kings all their power:

"Auramazda has invested me with sovereign power." — "*A. khshatram manā frābara.*" (*Ib.*, § 5.)

A true Lord of hosts, it is he that gives the victory in battle:

"By the will of *A.* I put to flight the army of Nidintu-Bel . . . I took possession of Babylon. . . . I defeated the armed bands of the rebels," etc. — "*Vashnā A. karam tyam Naditabairyhā adam ajanam . . . utā Bābirum agarbayam . . . . Avam kāram tyam hamitīryam aja. . .*" (*Ib.*, §§ 18, 19; col. 2, § 26, etc.)

Everywhere in these battles God acts as the auxiliary of the king, who thus expresses himself:

"*A.* brought me his assistance." — "*A. maiy upastam abara.*" (*Ib.*, *passim.*)

Or thus:

"*A.* delivered (the enemy) into my hands." — "*Dish A. mānā dastayā akunaush.*" (*Ib.*, col. 4, § 35.)

In a word, everything depends absolutely on the divine will:

"Everything that I have done, I have done, without exception, by the will of *A.*" — "*Ima tya adam akunavam vashnā Auramazdāha hamahyāyā tharda.*" (*Ib.*, § 59, 60.)

In another place—referring to his conquests—the king says:

"That which has been done, I did it all by the will of Auramazda." — "*Aita tya kartam ava visam vashnā Auramazdāhā akunavam.*" (Dar. N.R. A., § 5.)

God is omniscient. He sees all that takes place on earth and provides for all. For instance:

"When he saw that the earth was in a state of disorder, he gave it unto me." — "*Yathā avaina imām būmim yudiyā pasāva dim manā frābara.*" (Dar. N.R. A., § 4.)

Is not this indeed a true mark of divine providence?

§ 3. The "other Gods."—The "Gods of the Clans": Mithra and Anāhita

One is nevertheless astonished to find inferior divinities side by side with Auramazda; for we have already seen that Auramazda was "the greatest of all the gods." Sometimes the kings plainly lay the

credit of their successes to the will of Auramazda, as well as "the other gods." Thus Darius says:

"*A.* came to my aid — as well as the other gods." — "*A. upastām abara utā aniyā bagāha tyaiy hātiy.*" (Dar. Bh., col. 4, §§ 61, 62.)

Xerxes, too, prays thus:

"May *A.*, with the [other] gods, protect me." — "*Mām A. pātuv hada bagaibish.*" (Xerx. Pers. *b*, § 3, c. § 3.)

Who were these gods? From a Darius inscription of Persepolis we learn that these inferior divinities were nothing else than the special gods of the different clans (*Vith*) of the Persian people. The inscription reads thus:

"May *A.* and the gods of the clans come to my assistance." — "*Manā A. upastām baratuv hada vithibish bagaibish.*" (Dar. Pers. D., § 3.)

And again:

"I beseech Auramazda and the gods of the clans." — "*Jadiyāmiy Auramazdām hadā vithibish bagaibish.*" (*Ib.*)

This co-existence of subordinate divinities who are local deities belonging to the clans,[1] has nothing analogous to it in the Avesta. It probably indicates a prudent policy on the part of the Great King in reconciling certain of the subject tribes to his religious reform by taking over, in the capacity of inferior deities, their local gods. Such a policy is not unknown in the history of Oriental religions, though, of course, it is irreconcilable with a strict monotheism, such as Mazdeism professed to be.

But, besides these anonymous clan-gods, there occur in the inscriptions the names of two quasi-divine beings whose presence is still more significant: these

[1] Other recent authorities, however, translate *vithibish baghaibish* as either "the royal gods," or "all the gods."

are Mithra and Anāhata (or Anāhita). Thus we have Artaxerxes Mnemon either boasting that he has raised a temple to these divinities, or that he has established their worship in his palaces.[1]

"By the will (or grace) of *A.* I have raised a temple to Anahata and to Mithra [according to Spiegel, I have caused *A.* and *M.* to be worshipped in my palace."][2]

"*Anāhata utā Mithra vashnā A. apadānā adam akunavam.*"
(Art. Sus. A.)

Therefore he adds:

"May Auramazda, Anahata, and Mithra protect me."

"*Auramazdā Anahatā utā Mithra mām pātuv.*"
(*Ib.*)

In the inscriptions of Artaxerxes Ochus we find Mithra alone in association with Auramazda, and treated as a God:

"May Auramazda and the god Mithra protect me, myself, this land and all that I have done."

"*Mām Auramazdā utā M(i)thra baga pātuv utā imām DAHyum utā tyā mam kartā.*"
(Art. Pers., § 4.)

As will be seen elsewhere, Mithra and Anāhita are prominent characters in the Avesta, the latter a female spirit more commonly known under the name Ardvī Sūra.[3] These are but two among the numerous spirits or angels of the Zoroastrian celestial system which abound in the Avesta, and which are all demonstrably modifications of the old nature divinities, of the polytheistic religious system of the original Indo-Iranians. Thus, Mithra (Sanskrit Mitra) was originally the deity of light, whilst Ardvī Sūra or Anāhita was a goddess of the water. The

[1] The word "*apadānā*" is doubtful in meaning, probably "palace."
[2] Another version: "By the grace of Auramazda, Anāhita and Mithra, I built this *apadānā*."
[3] From the important part played later on by Mithra and Anāhita (Anaïtis), in the remarkable cult of Mithraism, see *The Religion of Mithra*, by C. Martindale, S.J., in this series.

Iranian prophet, in absorbing these ancient naturalistic divinities, converted them all into creatures of Ahura Mazda, and made them play a subordinate rôle as angelical beings and agents in his heavenly court. Their survival in the Avestic system, as well as in the royal inscriptions, is therefore a clear testimony to the nature-worship which preceded Mazdeism in ancient Iran.

I cannot forbear noticing that neither the term *vashnā* (will, or divine grace), nor the verb *dā*, which expresses the act of creation, as we shall see in the following section, are ever applied to these inferior divinities. They are, indeed, terms exclusively limited to the sovereign attributes of the Supreme God Auramazda.

§ 4. God the Creator.—Cosmogony

There can be no doubt that the Supreme God Auramazda is the Creator of all things, for nearly every line of the inscriptions is a signal witness to this fact. Not only do the Persian kings, from Darius I. to Artaxerxes III., appear to take a particular pleasure in repeating this dogma, but they add, whenever opportunity serves, a sort of outline of cosmogony. Here is the formula most in use:

"Auramazda is the great God,	"*Baga vazraka Auramazdā*,
Who created these heavens,	*hya avam asmānam adā*,
who created this earth,	*hya imām bumim adā*,
who created man,	*hya martiyam adā*,
who created man's happiness."	*hya shiyātim adā martiyahya*." (Dar. Elv., N.R., A., Sz.; Xerx. Pers., A, B, C, D; Art. Pers.)

In some inscriptions the places of heaven and earth are inverted; but in any case may we not be allowed to discern the creation of man as being the crowning

point of the work of the creation of the visible world? And is not this *Shiyāti* (happiness, enjoyment), which vividly recalls to mind the *Shâiti* (same meaning) of the first verse of the Avesta, an echo of an old tradition of a primitive state of mankind's happiness?

§ 5. The Relations of the Creator to the Creature.—Prayer; Worship; Intercession

We have already seen how man was dependent upon the will (or grace) of Auramazda. Man on his side offers his humble prayers to this God. Thus Darius exclaims:

"I call upon Auramazda. I beseech him to grant me (that which I ask)."

"*Adam Auramazdām jadiyāmiy aitamaiy A. dadātuv.*" (Dar. N.R. A., § 5.)

One may compare the many texts above quoted, wherein the King of kings prays to Auramazda, alone, or in association with the other gods, to grant him and his kingdom protection. There is yet another similar text:

"May *A.* together with the gods protect me, myself and my kingdom, and that which I have done . . . . and that which my father King Darius has done."

"*Mām A. pātuv hadā bagaibish utāmaiy khshatřam utā tyamaiy kartam . . . . utā tyamaiy pitřa Dārayavahaush KHSHyā kartam.*" (Xerx. Pers., A., § 4, C., § 3.)

Auramazda is also appealed to, to ward off evil:

"May *A.* defend me [from evil?]—my clan and my country."

"*Mām A. pātuv haca sara . . . (?) utā maiy vitham utā imām dahyāum.*" (Dar. N.R. A.)

Darius relates how, in his great distress, at the time of the revolt of Gomates the Magus (the false Smerdis) he called out to Auramazda, and was heard:

"Then I cried out to *A.*," etc.

"*Pasāva adam A. patiyāvahyaiy.*" (Dar. Bh., col. 1, § 13.)

It will be gathered from these instances that the kings made use of two verbs in which to express the action of beseeching or crying out to God, namely, *jad* (see above, same root in Zend), and *patiy-avahya*, as in the last quotation.

Not only does a man pray for himself, but also for (and even against) other men. Darius lifts up his voice to him who shall respect his monuments:

"May *A.* be thy friend! . . . and may he make successful to thee that which thou doest!"

"*A. thuvām dāushtā bīyā . . . utā tya kunavāhy avataiy A.* [*mazān*]*am* (?)[1] *kunautuv.*" (Dar. Bh., col. 4, § 56, 76).

Here, on the other hand, is his curse upon the head of him who shall dare to destroy his inscriptions:

"May *A.* be thy enemy [or rather thy killer] . . . . and may he bring to nought that which thou hast done."

"*A. taiy jatā bīyā* . . .[2] *utā tya kunavāhy avataiy A. nikātuv.*" (*Ib.*, § 66).

As regards *divine worship*, it may be asked whether there were any buildings specially erected for the purpose. We have already seen that the translation of the word *apadānā* (temple, or rather palace) is of doubtful meaning (see § 10). The same uncertainty exists with regard to the word *tacara* (Dar. Pers., A.), which may mean either a temple or a store, according as we compare with it the Armenian *tacar*, temple,[3] or the modern Persian *tajar*, "store, depôt"; yet it should be added that the sculptured work which surrounds the inscriptions gives us representations of what appears to be altars, and even fire-altars, similar to those in the Avestic worship. Herodotus

[1] Perhaps *ukartam*, "well done."

[2] Litt., may he be to thee *jatar*, from the root *jan*, to strike, to kill (Sansk., *han*).

[3] Nevertheless *tacarpet* is the rendering of ἀρχιτρικλίνος. Horn, "Neup. Etymol." s.v.

tells us that the ancient Persians would admit neither statues nor figures of gods. Yet in many of these sculptures curious images and figures may be seen, sometimes the half-body of a man enclosed in a disc or circle with wings outstretched, and sometimes winged discs without the human body. It may be reasonable to discern in the winged human figure, evidently an imitation of the Assyrian sculptures, a representation of the great god Auramazda himself, especially in cases where it is seen to hover about the king or over an altar. Nevertheless, the Parsis assert that these figures are nothing but representations of *fravashis*, the spirits or genii well known to readers of the Avesta, one of which spirits is inherent in every intelligent being, and the functions of which are akin with those of the Christian's guardian angel. If this be so we should have to credit the dogmas of the Achaemenean religion with a belief in *fravashis*, of which there is not the slightest trace in the text of the inscriptions.[1]

Want of space prevents us from going deeper into the interesting subject of these winged figures.

§ 6. The Moral Law.—The Divine Will; Sins; Falsehood; other Vices

Coming now to morality, it is important to note that the very foundations of morality are to be found in the accomplishment of the divine will, and in obedience to the commands of God. Here is an exhortation of Darius:

"Oh man! despise not the commands of Auramazda. Turn not away from the right path. Sin not!"

"*Martiyā hyā Auramazdāhā framānā hauvtaiy gastā mā thadaya pathim tyām rāstām mā avarada mā staraya* (or *stakava*)."
(Dar. N.R. A. § 6.)

[1] For the *fravashis*, see the pamphlet on the Avesta, p. 21, etc.

The expression good or right path (*pathish . . . . rāstā*) is equivalent in meaning to the *veh dino*, good law, of Mazdeism. It indicates the true religion, the true system of morality. It quite obviously recalls the "noble paths" used by Buddhists to signify the doctrine of Buddha, as well as an expression of the Avesta concerning the Zoroastrian religion, "There is only one path, that of virtue; all others are pathless."

Of all the sins condemned by the morality of the Achaemenids the most serious is undoubtedly the *lie* (*drauga*). On this point the truths expressed in the inscriptions are in wonderful accordance with the notions on the subject given by Greek historians, and also with Iranian tradition itself. For instance, Darius cries out:

"O thou who shalt be king after me, keep thou from lying! Should a man be found to be a liar, deal thou with him severely, if thou desirest to keep thy kingdom whole."

"*Tuvam kā khshāyathiya hya aparam āhy hacā draugā darsham patipayauvā martiya hya draujana ahatiy avam ufrastam parsā yadiy avathā maniyāhy dahyāushmaiy duruvā ahatiy.*"
(Dar. Bh., col. 4, § 37, 40).

All evils are attributed to lying. Darius tells us that during Cambyses's absence in Egypt

"the people became hostile and lying became widespread in the land."

"*pasāva kāra arika abava pasāva drauga dahyauvā vasiy abava.*"
(*Ib.*, col. 1, § 34.)

In another verse the same king, relating how a rebellion had taken place in many of the provinces of his vast empire, states that

"these provinces had broken into rebellion, it was lying that had made them rebellious."

"*dahyāvu imā tyā hamitřiyā abava drauga dish hamitřiyā akunaush.*"
(*Ib.*, col. 4, § 33, 34.)

Therefore the king prays to Auramazda to guard

his kingdom from lying, as it was one of the three chief scourges of a people:

"May *A.* protect this land from the hostile inroads, from bad harvests, and from lying."

"*Imām dahyāum A. pātuv hacā hainīyā hacā dushiyārā hacā draugā.*"
(Dar. Pers. D., § 3.)

Every time that a usurper rises up against the lawful sovereign it is said, "He is one that lies": *adurujiya*, from the root *duruj*, Zend *druj*—a phrase that is continually recurring in the inscriptions.

The other sins condemned by the kings are, on the one hand, rebellion of the subject against authority, on the other, despotism or cruelty on the part of the ruler. Thus does Darius break forth with pride and say:

"*A.* has been my help . . . . for I have neither been a liar nor a tyrant."

"*A. upastām abara . . . . yathā naiy draujana āham naiy zūrakara āham.*"
(Dar. Bh., col. 4, § 63, 64.)

I must stop here, as we have now exhausted the data supplied to us in the Old Persian of the Achaemenid inscriptions so far discovered. It must have struck every reader how absolute is the silence of the inscriptions in regard to many of the characteristic doctrines of the Zoroastrian religion—for instance (as above noted), with respect to dualism and to the opposition existing between the Spirit of good and the Spirit of evil. Neither do the inscriptions contain the faintest reference to the great prophet Zarathushtra, the apostle of the sectaries of the Avesta. Nevertheless it must not be forgotten that it is dangerous to rely too much on arguments drawn *a silentio*, which must be made of use with the greatest care.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Weissbach und Bang, *Die altpersischen Keilinschriften herausgegeben.* Leipzig, 1893.

Spiegel, *Die altpersischen Keilinschriften im Grundtexte, etc.* 2nd edit. Leipzig, 1881.

A. V. Williams Jackson, *Persia Past and Present.* New York, 1906. (Prof. Williams Jackson in 1903 paid a visit to the famous rock of Behistan, and not without considerable risk and difficulty succeeded in making a fresh and very accurate collation of the inscription, elucidating many doubtful forms.)

King and Thompson, *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia.* Published by the Trustees of the British Museum. (A new collation of the text made on the spot by Messrs King and Thompson in 1904.)

Tolman, *Ancient Persian Lexicon and Texts.* New York, 1908. (Contains revised text and translation of inscriptions, utilising all recent research.)

3 / 2. 98

THE RELIGION OF THE AVESTA

From the French of

PROF. A. CARNOY

of Louvain University

THIS series already contains an able study of one phase of Persian Religion from the pen of the Right Rev. Dr. Casartelli, Bishop of Salford, entitled *The Religion of the Great Kings* (No. ix.). The author prefaces his account with certain general notions upon the Iranians and Iranian religions, and to these I cannot do better than refer the readers of the present paper for an introduction. In my own study, I shall confine myself to giving a concise account of the religious system attributed to Zoroaster. The *origin* and *chronological* development of this religion are still so much the object of discussion and divergent view, that perhaps I shall do better if I expose the various current opinions than if I try to assert any well-defined theory of my own.

I. THE SOURCES

Many writers, both Greek and Latin, mention Zoroaster, and afford us passing glimpses of the doctrines regarded by the Persians as originated by him. A satisfactory collection of these passages will be found in the Appendix to Professor A. V. Williams Jackson's *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran* (1899). Most frequently quoted are the *First*

Alcibiades of the Pseudo Plato (121E–122A), and the scholia upon it; the *Natural History* of Pliny (23–79 A.D.), vii. 15, xxx. 2, 1, etc.; and the *Isis and Osiris* of the pious old priest Plutarch (*c.* 80 A.D.). Had we, however, only sources such as these for our reconstruction of the personality of the Prophet of Iran, and of the characteristics of Zoroastrianism, we should form of them an idea not only inadequate, but altogether false.

In reality the religion of Zoroaster can only be studied in the *Avesta* itself, and in the vast literature of commentaries and religious writings to which the Avesta later on gave birth in Persia itself.

A. THE AVESTA.—By this name (Avesta = Pahlavi,[1] *avistāk*, a term of doubtful etymology) is designated all that remains to us of an immense religious literature composed in an Iranian dialect generally known as *Zend*. This term is incorrect; for in Pahlavi, *zend* means commentary; *Avistāk va Zand* means the Avesta and its Commentary. It is to the first translator of the Avesta, Anquetil Duperron (1771), that this confusion must be attributed. He made the Pahlavi expression into the word *Zendavesta*, in the belief that the term *zend* referred to the language. The idiom in which the Avesta is written is far best denoted simply as *Avestic*, for thus no premature definition is suggested.[2]

Certain German authorities have named it *Old Bactrian*, because they hold that the Avestic literature has its origin in the north-east of ancient Iran; but this point is not yet completely certain. The Avestic idiom is closely allied to the Old Persian of the Achaemenid inscriptions, though markedly divergent from it in certain points, as of phonetic, so

[1] *Cf.* p. 5.

[2] Exactly in this way, older grammarians, before the Greek in which the New Testament was written began to take its place in the general development of the Greek language, used to call it simply "New Testament Greek."

of vocabulary. The two dialects present analogous features in the progressive modification of the *Aryan* tongue — the Aryans were ancestors alike of the Persians and of the Indians—a tongue which survives with least deterioration in Sanskrit. It is of importance, however, to notice, that within the Avestic literature itself, slight differences are discernible between the dialect of the *gâthâs* on the one hand (*infr.* and p. 14), and that of the rest of the Avesta (Younger-Avesta).

Such portions of the Avesta as have come down to us, have survived because of their continued use in the Persian Liturgy. They are hymns; rubrics regulating sacrifice; solemn prayers to the various *Yazatas* (p. 20); codices of ceremonies and rules to be observed at ritual purifications; or formulæ of prayers to be used at the bed-side of dying persons.

Professor Geldner, who has collated a very great number of manuscripts, has published the extant Avesta in a large volume of 650 pages in folio (with variants). This is the latest and best edition. It includes:

1. The *Yasna* (properly = sacrifice. *Cf.* Skt. *yajña*), recited in honour of all the divinities, in particular at the sacrifice of the *haôma* and of the *myazda* (*cf.* p. 26). This is divided into 72 *hās*, which include, first, texts referring directly to the sacrifices, and, secondly, the hymns known as *gâthâs*, which have a more archaic flavour than the other parts of the Avesta, both linguistically, and from the character of the ideas they express. They profess to be the actual words of Zoroaster. The religious notions here expressed form a fairly definite religious system. Among them is included the *haptanghāiti*, generally considered to be of more recent date, and consisting of seven hymns addressed to Ahura Mazdāh, to the Ameshas-Spentas, to the Fravashis of the righteous, to Fire, to the Waters, and to the Earth (*cf. infr.* 21 *seqq.*). The Yasna contains, finally, certain specially

holy prayers, such as the *Ahuna Vairya*, the *Ashem Vohu*, etc.

2. The *Vîspered* (Avestic, *vīspe ratavō*, "all the masters") contains, by way of appendices to the Yasna, certain invocations to all divinities.

3. *The Vendîdâd* (Avestic, *vīdaēvō-dātem*: the law against demons), which has been called the Parsi Leviticus, is composed of twenty-two chapters (*fargards*). All of them save the first two, which relate the Creation and the story of Yima, the Iranian Noah, are consecrated to the rules to be observed in the various circumstances of life, in the event of faults committed, or ceremonial uncleanness contracted, or of illness, death, and so forth.

4. The *Yashts* (Avestic, *yashtay*,[1] adoration, prayer) and the *Khorda Avesta* (Lesser Avesta). The Yashts number twenty-one, and are solemn and highly elaborated hymns addressed to the various *yazatas* (divinities, angels, etc., *cf.* 20). They are written, to a great extent at least, in verse, and are by no means lacking in passages of high poetical value. Several, moreover, have a markedly mythological character. They include elements of a more popular description than is the religion of the Gâthâs, mingled with passages whose inspiration is of far more recent date.

All this literature composed but an insignificant fraction of the original Avesta, as we learn from Parsi tradition, a tradition confirmed by a passage of the sixth Book of the Dînkard (*infra*, p. 6), a Pahlavi document translated by West.[2] The entire collection composed twenty-one books (*nask*), of which only one, the Vendîdâd, has come down to us entire. The remaining portions of our Avesta are fragments from the other *nasks*, and there are good grounds for believ-

[1] We have adopted, in this paper, the transcriptions of Avestic words as given by Professor Bartholomae in his *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 1904, very slightly modified for the sake of easier printing.

[2] *Sacred Books of the East*, xxxvii.

ing that the *Bûndahishn* and other Pahlavi writings have preserved for us much that was contained in the original Avesta.

B. THE PAHLAVI LITERATURE.—By Pahlavi—a word generally interpreted as signifying *Parthian*—is understood the literary form in which Persian existed during the first centuries of the Christian era. It is also called "Middle Persian," because it is the connecting link between the Old Persian of the Achaemenid inscriptions and the New Persian, or Persian unqualified, which has been spoken in Persia since the introduction of Mohammedanism. Pahlavi was written in characters which descended from the Aramaic alphabet; and Aramaic influence over this dialect was, indeed, sufficiently marked to introduce into the texts a number of pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adverbs and substantives altogether Semitic in appearance. To-day, however, it is generally held[1] that these words were mere *ideograms*, symbols, that is, Semitic in origin, but pronounced by means of corresponding Iranian sounds. Thus we find written, *malkān malkā*, king of kings; but it would be pronounced, *shāhān shāh*; the written sign *men*, would be called *az* or *zi* (=of); *lā*, would be spoken *na*, "no," and so on, very much as in English we write *viz.* (=Latin *videlicet*) and say *namely*; we write *i.e.* and say *that is*. And it is a fact that no one of these Semitic terms subsists in Modern Persia, that their utilization even in Pahlavi seems purely mechanical, and that lexicons were composed in which the Pahlavi ideograms were transcribed in Pāzand (Iranian). There were even Pāzand translations of various Pahlavi documents.

A complete conspectus of Pahlavi literature already edited, or still existing only in manuscript, has been drawn up by the eminent specialist West.[2] It contains, in the front rank, a translation of the Avesta, of which

[1] Notably by Salemann, *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, i. p. 250.
[2] In the *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, ii. p. 75 *seqq.*

the main interest is the light it throws upon the view taken of their holy book by the Zoroastrians of the first century of our era. We confess, however, that certain scholars, Professors Mills, for instance, and Darmesteter, entertain a respect for this translation which to others seems exaggerated. It is altogether impossible to deny that in many passages, especially of the Gâthâs, there are many manifest blunders, which reveal a state of thought already remote from that which we can observe in the original text.

Among the other Pahlavi writings which are important for the study of Zoroastrianism in the Sassanid epoch (from *c.* 212 B.C.), we may quote the *Dīnkard*,[1] "Acts of Religion," compiled indeed in the ninth century A.D., but containing a vast and most precious collection of details on the doctrines, manners, traditions, history, literature, etc. of the palmy days of Mazdeism. Especially noticeable is its body of traditions on the life and preaching of the Prophet.

The *Būndahishn*[2] is a Genesis: it contains the Creation of the World, of divine beings, and of men; the conflict between the creatures of Aūharmazd and those of Aharman; dissertations on the nature of various creatures, and of nations; on eschatology; on geography, and on the mythic history of Iran.

The *Mainyō-i-Khard*, or *Maīnōg-ī-Khirat*,[3] "The Spirit of Wisdom," contains the answers of this Spirit to 62 questions upon religion propounded by a sage.

The *Artā-Virāf-Nāmak*,[4] the "Divina Commedia" of the Zoroastrians, is a description of heaven and hell as contemplated by the sage Virāf in a vision of seventeen days' duration, induced by the means of narcotics.

Of historical texts, the most often quoted is the

[1] Tr. by West, *Sacred Books of the East*, xxxvii. and xlvii.

[2] Edited and tr. by Justi, *Der Bundehesh*, Leipzig, 1868. Tr. by West, *S. Books of the East*, v.

[3] Tr. by West, Stuttgart, 1871, and *S.B.E.*, xxiv.

[4] Tr. by Barthélemy, Paris, 1887 (French), and earlier (English) by West.

Kārnāmak-ī-Artakhshir ī Pāpakān,[1] which relates the semi-mythical reign of King Ardashîr, founder of the Sassanid dynasty, around whose name have crystallized various ancient epic myths, of which some may be referred even to the essentially epic period of Cyrus the Great.[2]

Of documents later than the Mussulman conquest, a few still afford a certain interest from the point of view of Avestic studies, in so far as they have preserved for us certain myths or legends in epic form, for instance the celebrated Persian poem of Firdusi, "The Book of the Kings," or else traditions connected with religion, such as several of the *rivâyats*. A few religious treatises were still being composed in the later Middle Ages, such as the *Sad-dar*, the *Zartusht-nāmah*, etc.

II. Origin of the Avesta

The most divergent opinions are current among specialists as to the composition of this Iranian Bible, and especially as to the date of its compilation. The dominant view, however, modified of course in each several case by the personal contributions of individual scholars, is that put forward by Professor Geldner,[3] which keeps as close as possible to Mazdean tradition. In this view, the older portions of the Avesta are held to go back to Zoroaster himself, and are to be put at some time within the sixth century B.C. This old Avesta will next have suffered severely in the reign of Alexander and his successors. Ardashîr, the first Sassanid king, aided by his high-priest Tansar, is then held to have collected its débris, and the Avestic Canon will finally have been fixed under

[1] Tr. by Nöldeke, Göttingen, 1878.

[2] A. Nöldeke, *Der Iranische Nationalepos*, p. 132 *sqq.*, in *Grundriss der Ir. Phil.*, i.

[3] *Grundriss Iran. Philol.*, ii. p. 32 *sqq.*

Shâpûr II. (310–379 A.D.). Professor Bartholomae and his disciple Professor Reichelt[1] are inclined to thrust back the composition of the gâthâs further even than the seventh century, while Professor Mills[2] actually speaks of 1000 or 1200 years before our era.

The reasons put forward for supposing that the most ancient parts of the Avesta can scarcely be later than the sixth century may be summed up as follows:—

1. The witness of Greek literature proves the existence of a religious literature in Persia of ancient date. Herodotus (i. 32) speaks of a Theogony, or Genealogy of the gods, which the Magi recited at the sacrifice. Hermippus of Smyrna, in the third century B.C., mentions the writings of Zoroaster, and Nicolaus of Damascus and Dio Chrysostom (*c.* 100 A.D.) do so too.[3] Strabo (xv. 733) and Pausanias (v. 27. 3) refer to prolonged liturgies in barbaric tongue, which the Magi read in their Fire-temples, as was, indeed, the custom in the Mazdean religion. But need all this imply the existence of the Avesta?

2. Pahlavi tradition is unanimous in speaking of an Avesta written 300 years before Alexander, of which that king, it declares, burnt the official copy. This tradition has no trustworthy arguments to buttress it, yet in itself it seems by no means artificial and is devoid of legendary features.

3. The Avesta could not possibly have been composed in the Sassanid period in a tongue which had then long been dead. That it was so dead is proved by the fact that the need was felt at precisely that epoch of a Pahlavi translation and of long commentaries in order that the original, constantly misunderstood, as the blunders of the Pahlavi prove conclusively (*cf. supra*, p. 6), might be rendered intelligible. Professor

[1] *Awestisches Elementarbuch*, p. 5.
[2] *Zarathustra, the Achaemenids, and Israel*, p. 422.
[3] *Cf.* Williams Jackson, *op. cit.*, Appendix.

Geldner[1] points out that the redactors of the Vendîdâd had actually become ignorant of the metrical structure of the texts they were codifying.

4. The Avestic language represents a stage of the Iranian language as distant from Pahlavi as Latin is from French. Now, on the coins of the Indo-Scythian kings of the first and second centuries A.D. their names occur already in a developed Pahlavi guise.[2] But a transformation of this character presupposes a lapse of several centuries. No doubt the Avestic dialect may still have been written, as a dead language, at a period when only Middle-Persian was spoken, but this could only be intelligible if an important body of religious literature already existed in that language, of which the origin must be sought in the days when Avestic was actually spoken, that is to say, at a period probably by no means distant from that of the first Achaemenid kings; for these kings make use, in their inscriptions, of a dialect extremely closely allied with Avestic.

5. The evolution, again, of certain religious notions cannot take place, any more than that of a language, all at once. Now the name of the God of Heaven is, for Darius, Auramazdâ (Ὡρομάζης in Aristotle), while in the gâthâs not only are the two names Ahura Mazdâh still quite separate, but as a rule they are found in the inverse order, and often enough only one of the two is written. *Vohu Manah* and *Khshathra Vairya* are two very gâthic concepts (*cf. infra*, 12), where they appear as barely personified abstractions. Now in Strabo the former is already the god Omanos, and his physiognomy is altogether different. The latter is found in the first century as a personal name on Indo-Scythian coins, but in the stereotyped and barely recognizable form of Saorêoar (Pahlavi, *Shahrevar*).

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

[2] Thus we read: Οσλαγνο = Pahl. *Vashlagno*; Avestic *Verethraghna*; Μιορο = Pers. *Mihr*, Pahl. *Mitrō*, Av. *Mithra*; Φαρρο = Pers. *farr*, Av. *hvarenaṅh*, etc. (*Cf.* West, *Grund. Ir. Phil.*, ii. p. 75.)

6. If Professor Jackson went rather far when, in his *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, he represented the prophet as a historical personage, yet one must own that Zoroaster has none of the characteristics of a mythic hero. His name (which appears to mean the Owner of Old Camels) has no symbolical or mythological signification. The gâthâs attributed to him are redolent of the most unaffected simplicity and sincerity, and contain allusions to an extremely realistic environment.

Diametrically opposed to the opinion we have just detailed must be placed that put forward by James Darmesteter in his French translation of the Avesta, vol. iii.[1]

He maintains that the *whole* of the ancient Avesta perished during the Alexandrian period, and that the Mazdean restoration occasioned the compilation of an entirely new book in which the relics of the older ideas were run together into the shape of a religious philosophy strongly influenced by Gnosticism and Neoplatonism.

Nearly all Iranian scholars have combated this theory. It has been recently taken up anew by Fr. M. J. Lagrange, O.P.[2] De Harlez, too,[3] though he admitted that certain parts might actually go back to the period of Darius, had already shown himself disposed to reduce the date of the composition of the greater part of the Avesta to a much more recent epoch.

The following are the main arguments adduced in favour of Darmesteter's theory :—

1. Arab historians speak of the important part taken in the religious restoration under Ardashîr by the priest Tansar, whom we mentioned above (on p. 7), and describe him as a "Platonist." This does not,

[1] But in his English translation, *S. B. E.*, iv., Introd., he still maintained the conservative opinion.

[2] *Revue Biblique*, 1904, p. 42 *sqq.*

[3] *Introduction to the Translation of the Avesta*, p. cxciii.

however, in any way define the rôle actually played by Tansar.[1]

2. Allusions, we are told, are discoverable in the Avesta to quite recent events—the reign of Alexander, Buddhism, the Arabs.[2] Yet these allusions are to be found, if at all, in the relatively late sections of the book; and many are disputed.

3. The witness of Greek writers and of the Achaemenid inscriptions represent the Persian religion as a fairly elementary nature worship. That is true; but the data (save in the matter of the burial of the dead, a point whose importance has been much exaggerated) are not here to any great extent out of harmony with Avestic ideas, especially where these are in closer affinity to the popular religion. Zoroastrianism, properly so called, may well have originated as the doctrine of a school of magi somewhere within the limits of Iran. Very gradually will it have reached its widest development, and we can clearly see coexisting at its side a more popular religion, and only when it had fused with this can it be said to have become the religion of Persia.

4. The Gâthâs constantly speak of a kingdom whose advent is expected by the faithful. This notion recalls that of the Jewish kingdom of God. Yet among the Jews the idea was too ancient and too essentially national for us to suppose that they borrowed it from Persia. Therefore it was the Gâthâs which derived it, it is argued, from Israel.[3] These facts are indeed accurate; but even if Jewish influence did affect Iran in this matter, this may well have taken place at a quite early period, in Media, perhaps, or in Chaldea. And the two conceptions may quite well be mutually independent. Indo-Iranian traditions

[1] *Cf.* Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, iii. p. xxi, *sqq.*; Mills, *Zarathustra and the Greeks*, p. 12 *sqq.*

[2] Darmesteter, *ib.*, p. xliii, *sqq.*; De Harlez, *L'Avesta*, Intro., p. cxciii.

[3] Lagrange, *l.c.*, p. 42 *sqq.*

constantly represent, in the Vedas,[1] the god Varuna (the Hindu equivalent of Mazdâh) as the God-king (Kshatriya) over a vast kingdom (mahikshatra),[2] a universal king, ruling over the world of the ṛta (moral law, *infr.* 21), as in Persia Mazdâh rules over that of the *arta* or *asha*. The idea of a kingdom of the dead is similarly common to the Indians and the Iranians, and the gâthic *Khshathra* is a notion which may well have been combined out of these elements.

5. The gâthic idea of Vohu-Manah recalls that of the Neo-Platonist Logos, especially as portrayed in the system of the Alexandrian Jew Philo.[3] Professor Geldner[4] denies, however, that the resemblance is marked; and calls attention to the fact that by the time of Philo, Vohu-Manah appears in Strabo's works already in entirely anthropomorphic guise, and cloaked by the name and attributes of Omanos (*cf. supra*, 9) and as unlike as possible to Philo's unpersonified Logos. Further, the relationship of the notion of the Ameshas-Spentas (*cf. infr.* 19, 20) of the Gâthâs, with that of Philo's δυνάμεις or Virtues generally, and that of Vohu-Manah with the Logos in particular,—if indeed the similarity be no mere coincidence—would be far better explained by the influence of Iranian ideas upon Philo, who certainly was not ignorant of these.[5]

6. In general it is urged that the Gâthic system is too abstract and philosophical to be old. To suppose it old is, says Fr. Lagrange, "to suppose the development of philosophy before the Greeks." Certainly the Gâthic religion is extraordinarily abstract; but its abstractions are, so to say, mystical rather than philosophical. And again we must not forget that they constitute no isolated phenomenon. The Zoroastrians appear to have simply developed an Indo-Iranian

[1] *Cf.* Lecture v. 2, etc.
[2] This word is the same as the Avestic *khshathra*, "kingdom."
[3] *Cf.* xviii. p. 20.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 39.
[5] So he declares himself, *Quod omnis probus liber*, M. iii. 456.

tendency, for the Vedas themselves contain some fairly abstract notions, and precisely in connection with the worship of the Âdityas, a divine group closely analogous to that of the Ameshas-Spentas. The members of this Hindu group centre round Varuna, as do those of the Zoroastrian round Ahura Mazdâh. They contain names of deified abstractions such as Bhaga or Amsa, "the share"; Daksha, "skill"; Aditi, "freedom from bonds (of sin)";[1] and perhaps even Mitra, "contract" (*cf. infra*, p. 21). Of the Ameshas-Spentas, Asha or Arta, has his Indian parallel in the conception of the *rta*, "the moral law," a precise equivalent; and both Ârmatay and the Vedic Aramati are a pious disposition which draws down divine benedictions on the faithful.

It may be said, in conclusion, that the date of the composition of the Avesta is still uncertain. Although the arguments adduced by those who tend to lower it as far as our own era have not all the force which their patrons assign to them, it must be confessed that the discussion is not thereby closed. What is certain is, that the book contains parts of very different age, of which there are some which may well be extremely ancient, and others which may be relatively quite modern.

Given this uncertainty upon the date and the origin of the Avesta, it is not astonishing that agreement as to the birthplace of Zoroastrianism has not been achieved. The prevalent opinion is that the movement of reform undoubtedly originated in the West (Media?), but developed primarily in the North (Bactria?), because the geography of the North is the best known to the Avesta, and where a social and political state may be descried more conformable to what is revealed by the Gâthâs than to what we have reason to believe existed in Media and Persia properly so called.

[1] Oldenberg, *Relig. Védique*, p. 203 *sqq.*

III. The Religion of the Gâthâs

The Gâthâs are a series of hymns, or, more exactly, of sermons in verse, as Professor Bartholomae has called them; they are seventeen in number, and are arranged in five groups, standing, in the Avestic Canon, in chapters 28 to 34, 43 to 51, and 53 of the Yasna. Their style is vigorous. They are full of allusions to contemporary personalities and situations. Notably they are constant in their attacks upon the priests of another cult, the *Kavay* and the *Karpan*; they inveigh against nomadic life, brigandage, and the sacrifice of animals. The prophet laments his helplessness, and sighs over the persecutions which he suffers. He invokes as protectors *Vîshtâspa*, *Frashaoshtra*, *Jâmâspa*, etc. The whole of this literature bears the stamp of sincerity and good faith. Its dialect is markedly archaic (*cf. supra*, p. 3), at once in its phonetics, its formation of words, and its syntax.[1] The ideas which are expressed in it survive, no doubt, in the Mazdeism of the Younger-Avesta, but in the Gâthâs they are found at an earlier stage of development, and, in this simpler form, certain features of the later religion are completely lacking. What is particularly striking from this point of view is the fact that the secondary divinities of Iran, even the most popular, are not mentioned at all; *Mithra* and *Anâhita* are absent,[2] and the sacrifice of the *haôma* appears not to be held in esteem.

The theory of Dualism is exposed in the third Gâthâ (Yasna 30).

There were at the beginning of things twin spirits, those of Good and Evil in thought, word, and deed. Of these, the wise man must choose the good, that of the faithful followers of the *Asha*—righteousness,

[1] On this point see especially Reichelt, *Awestisches Elementarbuch*, p. 9.

[2] *Cf.* Lect. ix. 17.

truth, morality. Such persons will reach a supremely happy existence, while the most terrible of destinies awaits the clients of the spirit of falsehood, *drug*.

The universe is divided into the world of the Asha and the world of the Drug. In this latter are included the evil spirit, *Añrô-Mainyav*; the *daêvas*, devils; their priests, *Kavay*, *Karpan*, etc., and all wicked men, *dregvant*. These constantly persecute the faithful, *ashavan*, and seek to seduce them from their allegiance to good. A continual war rages between the two parties, and it is a work of merit whether a man do harm to the *dregvants* or whether he convert them.

On their side the faithful are supported by the army of good, that is, by *Mazdâh Ahura* surrounded by his heavenly court. This court is composed of abstract entities representing divine attributes. Their original meaning is still everywhere felt in the Gâthâs, and their personality is still fairly fluid.[1] Their number is not as yet defined. Pre-eminent among them are *Asha*, the moral law, righteousness; *Vohu-Manah*, the good spirit; *Khshathra*, royalty; *Ârmatay*, prudence, humility, or piety. Next comes the pair *Haurvatât*, health, prosperity, and *Ameretatât*, immortality. These six entities come later on to form, with Ahura-Mazdâh at their head, the group of the seven *Ameshas-Spentas*, immortal spirits, of which we shall speak below (pp. 19, 20). In the Gâthâs, they are still inseparable from several other personified abstractions: *Sraosha*, obedience; *Ashay*, reward; *Tushnâmatay*, silent submission, and others. These beings serve in some measure as intermediaries between God and man; it is by them that man approaches Mazdâh, and through them that He communicates with man, granting him instruction, benefits, and final recompense.[2]

[1] *Cf.* xiii. 4, 7, and contrast xi. 4.

[2] As an interesting parallelism of conception, without assuming the possibility of any relation in fact, we may recall the Jewish tendency

This ultimate recompense is represented as a world of prosperity and well-being. These advantages are often enough portrayed under a material form which could be suitable only to this life—blessings, for instance, upon family, lands, and possessions. But very frequently, though a clean-cut distinction between the two conceptions be not always easy to draw, the recompense is simultaneously figured as promised only in the next life.[1] This is the good reward, *vaŋuhîm ashîm*, which necessarily presupposes not alone the practice of good in the thoughts, words, and actions of this life, but a tremendous test at this life's end, a last judgement, *mazê yâŋhô*. This recompense, this kingdom so ardently desired, is generally called "The Kingdom of the Delights of Vohu-Manah," because it is the result, for the faithful, of their good spirit, *mens bona*, that is to say of the *state of soul*—an idea essential to all Gâthic doctrine—which is at the very root of all conversion, of all virtuous and religious life. It is the love of good, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of Ahura-Mazdâh, which must be that too of each one of His faithful. This conception is distinct from that of the *Spenta Mainyav*, *bonus spiritus*, which is but another name for Ahura Mazdâh in so far as He is opposed to Aŋrô Mainyav, the "evil spirit."

Finally, the moral life of the disciple of Zoroaster, according to the Gâthâs, may be summed up as follows:—[2]

to substitute the Angel of Yahweh, or the Face, or Glory, of God for the direct divine agency, in occasions of inter-communication between God and man; moreover, the growing inclination, accelerated by some forms of the philosophy of the Logos, to make of the divine Wisdom almost a self-subsistent attribute, a hypostasis other than the Divine essence itself.

[1] Though even here it is often enough described as a possession of *riches*, *Khshathra ishtôish*, *magahyâ*, *râyô ashîsh*; or of similar advantages, *savaŋhô*. *Cf.* Carnoy, *Muséon*, ix. p. 121.

[2] We here adopt a certain amount of Christian terminology, partly because it is genuinely equivalent, and partly to make ourselves the better understood.

Animated by the Good Spirit (*Vohu-Manah*), the true disciple of Zoroaster takes his stand against the Spirit of Ignorance and Falsehood (*drug*), its satellites (*daêva*), its priests (*kavay*, *karpan*, etc.), its pomps (sacrifices of living creatures, and possibly of the haôma), and against the works which put a man in its power—brigandage, lies, insolence; and he chooses with wise prudence (*ârmatay*) the service of the God of Knowledge (*Mazdâh*), who is also the Spirit of Good (*Spenta Mainyav*). His thoughts, words, and actions must be conformed to the moral law, the law of truth (*asha*), and to submission to God (*sraosha*). He will be guided by a spiritual patron (*ratav*), and will lead the life of a peaceable citizen, devoted to agriculture, and full of respect for the creatures of Mazdâh, and in particular for the ox, in which animal are as it were concentrated the temporal benefits of God. In this manner he will be treading in the path that leads to the longed-for kingdom (*Khshathra vairya*), the Kingdom of Good, which is that too of all manner of goods, of prosperity (*haurvatât*), and of immortality (*ameretatât*), obtaining in this way the recompense (*âdâ, ashay*) which he hopes for, both in this life and in the next, a recompense to be made perfect when the last judgement shall have been accomplished.

IV. Mazdeism Matured

Now that we have given a general view of what we may reasonably believe to be the oldest and purest phase of the religion of Zoroaster, we must perforce proceed to describle succinctly what is generally understood by the name of *Mazdeism*, that is to say, the religion which is revealed to us in the Avesta taken as a whole, the religion, namely, which became that of all Persia under the Sassanids. This was the period when Mazdeism reigned triumphant, and, to

understand how the Zoroastrians of this splendid epoch understood their religion, we shall, of course, have to take into account the Pahlavi literature which we described above, p. 5.

A. DUALISM.—The Gâthâs have already presented us with all the essentials of a complete dualistic system. This system, in the Mazdean religious philosophy, crystallizes into a "doctrine of two principles, independent, hostile, and essentially opposed the one to the other,"[1] the Spirit of Good, and the Spirit of Evil. Each is a Creator, the one of the good spirits, *Ameshas-Spentas*, *Yazatas*, and of all good and pure existences; the other of demons, *daévas*, *drugs*, and of all that is bad, whether in the material or in the spiritual sense of the word. The creation of the second is produced explicitly to oppose that of the former, and struggles against it, and modifies it. The fight between the two principles is constant, and shall not cease till the end of time, when the Spirit of Good shall conquer, and shall annihilate his adversary, who, in the older system, was co-eternal with himself.

Dualism is the supreme effort of Iranian thought to solve the problem of the origin of Evil. It is a solution which, in spite of its co-ordination of these two principles, yet does not hinder Mazdeism from approaching closely to Monotheism. Doubtless certain philosophical restrictions were inevitable in a system which started from a dualistic principle: for instance, Ahura-Mazdâh (Parsi, *Ormazd*) could not be considered as *Infinite*, since His existence is necessarily limited by that of Aṅro-Mainyav (Parsi, *Ahriman*). Yet Ahura-Mazdâh is well worthy of the name of God, and was in fact adored as God. The evil spirit was, if I may so describe him, a *negative* entity. The desire to reduce this dualism to unity did actually

[1] Casartelli, *La Philosophie Religieuse du Mazdéisme sous les Sassanides*, p. 44 *sqq.*

create various notions of a philosophical character, such as the *Zrvan akarana*, Unlimited Time, which was more or less confused with the idea of destiny (*bakhta*), and was held to have engendered both Spirits alike. Certain philosophers again attempted to argue that the Spirit of Evil could have been born from a bad thought of the Spirit of Good.

B. AHURA-MAZDÂH AND THE GOOD SPIRITS.—Ahura-Mazdâh—"the God who sees all, remembers all (*cf.* Avestic *mazdāh*, memory ; Sanscrit *medhā*, wisdom)—is omniscient, omnipotent, supreme, sovereign, good, beneficent, merciful.[1] He is Creator (*dâtar*) of the ten Ameshas-Spentas, of the Yazatas, of Paradise, of the vault of the sky, of the blazing sun, of the shining moon, of the manifold stars, of life, of the wind, of the air, of fire, of water, of earth, plants, animals, metals, and of man" (*Dînkart*, ii. 81–3). From His creatures He expects honour, gratitude, and prayer.

The *Ameshas-Spentas* (Immortal Holy Ones) are the six principal individualities among those which already play so important a part in the Gâthâs. Their personality became ever more definite as time went on, and ultimately formed a group limited to six, among whom the government of the whole material world was apportioned.

Vohu-Manah, whom Plutarch calls εὔνοια, "good mind or thought," continues to hold an essential and primary position. He is the first creation of Mazdâh. He is the Councillor of God and of men. But he is moreover the special protector of domestic animals, an office for which no adequate explanation is as yet forthcoming. Similarly *Asha Vahishta* (Plutarch, ἀλήθεια, truth) is no longer the Moral Law alone, but also guardian of fire; *Khshathra Vairya* is no longer merely the Good Reign (Plutarch, εὐνομία), the personification of the beneficent power of Mazdâh, which is to constitute the happiness of the righteous man in

[1] *Cf.* Casartelli, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

this world and the next, but he is also patron of metals, *Spenta Ârmatay*, "holy humility," and continues to be the antithesis of *Tarômatay*, whom the Greeks would call ὕβρις, wanton insolence. Pahlavi translates Ârmatay by a word meaning "wisdom," and Plutarch by σοφία; and this translation is indeed appropriate to the rôle played by this attribute in the Gâthâs. In its material aspect, it presides over earth. *Haurvatât* (health) and *Ameretatât* (immortality) remain what they were, the twin benefits in which the happiness of the elect consists. Plutarch translates them by πλοῦτος, wealth, which, it will be remembered, is well in the spirit of the Gâthâs, where the felicity of the longed-for kingdom is habitually represented under the designation of riches; but, in their secondary capacity, they have become the protecting genius of waters and plants respectively.

The Yazatas.—Below Mazdâh and the Ameshas-Spentas come the *Yazatas*, "beings worthy of veneration." These are, for the most part, ancient Aryan divinities reduced, in the Avestic system, to the rank of auxiliary angels. Of these we may quote *Âtar*, the personification of that Fire which plays so important a part in the Mazdean cult that its members have actually become known as fire worshippers. Fire was for them the symbol of the Divinity, and the consecrated emblem of faith. In its personified form as a Yazata, it is the son of Mazdâh and clothes itself in five different guises. Its essence is especially manifested in the appearance of the *hvarenah*, aureole or glory which enhaloes kings and priests. By the side of this genius of fire is found that too of the waters; this is *Anâhita*, the Anaïtis of Greek writers.

Next to them come the divinities who preside at the judgement of the dead, *Mithra*, *Sraosha*, *Rashnu*. The last two are personified abstractions; Rashnu is *Justice* and Sraosha is religious *Obedience*.

The cult of Mithra is more important than that of

the two others. He is originally identical with the Hindu Mitra, who was the faithful companion of Varuna, the Indian equivalent of Mazdâh. Both are "moral" gods, and guardians of the ṛta (Avestic *asha*) and the avengers of sins. In the Veda, Mitra is especially regarded as he who keeps men to their plighted word. In the Iranian system, Mithra is everywhere quite definitely the God of contracts, so much so that he has actually been called the personification of the idea of Contract.[1] In the Avesta (Yasht x.) he clearly appears as the God of the *given word*; and it is by him that Persians swore. He is in consequence God of military honour, God of soldiers, and this explains his popularity among victorious armies and the enormous diffusion of his cult—strongly modified, no doubt, by alien influences—among the Roman legions in the imperial era of Roman history.[2] He is the God who sees all things, even the most secret and hidden. In the Avesta the sun is represented as his eye, an idea which can be found too in the Veda, applied to Mitra and Varuna, the guardians of the moral law. This last piece of symbolism led to the identification of the Iranian god with the sun in the Mithraic worship of the Roman empire. Hence Mithra is one of the most popular divinities of Iran, and his absence from the Gâthâs must be due to a deliberate exclusion which Mazdeism could not maintain. Beside Mithra, soldiers used to venerate *Verethraghna*, the presiding spirit of Victory.

THE FRAVASHIS.—These spirits, whose name is already visible in the proper name Phraortes a century before Darius, are closely analogous to the Roman Genii[3] and to our guardian angels. They are attached each to a specified human person, though they exist before his birth. After death they unite themselves

[1] Meillet, *Journ. As.*, ninth series, x. p. 142 *sqq.*
[2] *Cf.* xvi. 8, etc.
[3] *Cf.* xiii. 11.

to the soul of the dead man, and may indeed have been originally a sort of Dii Manes.[1] Gods no less than men have their Fravashis; and these spirits, who are the source for their protégé of a thousand benefits, receive a special cultus in return.

A conception fairly similar to that of the Fravashis is that of the *Geush urvan*, "the soul of the ox," which is indeed the deified soul of the primordial ox, which, according to the Bundahishn, lived three thousand years with the first man *Gayō Maretan*, and was the progenitor of all oxen, and indeed of all the other good things of earth, of which he was the symbol.

C. The Evil Spirits.—*Aŋro-Mainyav* is, as we have seen, the evil counterpart of Ahura-Mazdâh. He is a wicked being, anxious to hurt the creatures of the good creation. Instead of being wise, he is ignorant. He is afraid of Mazdâh. While the Good Spirit lives in the realm of joy and light, the Evil Spirit lives in the darkness and the abyss. He longs to enslave the creatures of Mazdâh by causing them to commit sins, especially those of infidelity, doubt, avarice, and, above all, of falsehood, or to contract defilement by contact with what is impure. It is he who has put poison in plants, and inflicted on unlucky humanity no less than 4333 sorts of illnesses. He is often called *Drug*, "Deception," without further qualification, especially in the Gâthâs; and this title is sometimes applied to other demons too, especially to him who is assigned as adversary to Sraosha, and to Nasav (*Cadaver*), the demon of death, who seeks to make himself master of corpses.

Under Aŋro-Mainyav are marshalled the *daêvas*, "demons," and among these, six stand out prominent, of whom a group has been formed explicitly antithetic to the Ameshas-Spentas. Little would be gained were we to write out a catalogue of their names. Among them we find *Aeshma*, demon of violence, and

[1] *Cf.* xiii. 14.

Aka Manah, the "bad spirit," the enemy of Vohu-Manah and others. There are some other demons or maleficent beings who play a rôle not without its importance: such are *Bûshyañstā*, demon of sloth; *Afraosha*, demon of dryness; and besides these we find the *Yâtus*, or sorcerers, and the *Pairikās* (whence comes, in Persian, *Peri*), which are spirits of seduction.

D. THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN.—Before Creation, nothing existed save Infinite Time, *zrvan akarana*. With creation begins a long period of 12,000 years. During the first 3000 years, Ahura-Mazdâh kept His creation within the limits of the spiritual and immaterial. The *fravashis* of creatures yet to be, alone existed. This space of years concludes with the awakening of Añro-Mainyav, who till then had lain as it were in a torpor and inactive. Ahura-Mazdâh offers him peace, but he refuses it, and war is declared between them for the remaining 9000 years. Mazdâh strikes his adversary with the omnipotent prayer of the *Ahuna-Vairya* and stuns him.

The next 3000 years are occupied with the production, in their material form, of those creatures whose spiritual prototypes had already existed during the first era. At the beginning of the seventh millennium Añro-Mainyav reappears on the stage and profoundly injures all creation. To start with, he slays the primordial bull and the first man. From their dead bodies proceed respectively animals and men. A sort of golden age succeeds, over which an ancient king, Yima, is held to have presided. The golden age lasts for a thousand years, and comes to an end owing to a sin committed by the king, who, as a chastisement, is dethroned by the dragon *Azhi Dahâka*. This Yima is an Indo-Iranian character. He corresponds to the *Yama* of the Hindus, who was the first man, and also king of the infernal regions. He gained further celebrity by the construction of a shelter

(*vara*) in which he protected mankind during the miseries occasioned by a severe winter. In Persian legendary lore, he plays a great part under the name of *Jamshêd* (*cf.* Omar Khayyám, *Rubáiyát*, xvii.).

The concluding 3000 years open with the revelation made to Zoroaster, and the conversion of the King *Vishtaspa*. There follows the appearance of a series of prophets, *Saoshyant*, and towards the end of time, that of *Astvatereta*, the Saoshyant *par excellence*. At the conclusion of the twelve thousand years shall come the general resurrection, the victory of Mazdâh over his enemy, and the initiation of a new period of Infinite Time.

E. Moral System.—Mankind finds himself at the centre of the world, and in him focusses the battle between the two spirits. But by the practice of virtue he can place himself on the side of Mazdâh, and contribute to the victory of good over evil. By sin, he makes himself the prey of evil spirits, a *dregvant*. The duties of the *ashavan*, or righteous, are the up-keep of the worship of Ahura-Mazdâh and of the good spirits, the preservation of the sacred fire, and the veneration of the dead. Of personal virtues, it is honesty and straightforwardness that are most highly valued. But of the Zoroastrian is demanded the observation of scrupulous personal purity, and this consists not only in abstinence from adultery, rape, unnatural vice, and the like, but also in all manner of ritual performances, often grotesque enough, relating to the sexual relations, and to all contact with ceremonially unclean persons or objects, especially corpses. Charity towards the poor, hospitality towards the stranger, are likewise preached as virtues, enjoined, and practised. In the sphere of social virtues, the duty of the tillage of the soil is exalted to the rank of a primary virtue. To cut a tree becomes a sin. The tenderest care surrounds the ox and the dog. This extremely lofty moral code offers no ground for reproach at all,

save the rather galling and childish character of some of those minute observances on which, with exaggerated solemnity, it insists. It is the Vendîdâd which gives these details, and sometimes enjoins what we should consider trifling under sanctions as grave as those which belong to genuinely criminal actions. Thus it is as grave an offence, for instance, to refuse its food to a dog as to allow a priest to die of starvation (Vendîdâd, xiii. 59, 60). Moreover, the code is disfigured for a Western conscience by the canonization as a virtue in the Pahlavi books of the *Khvaêthvâdâtha* (Pahlavi *Khvetukh-dâh*), for this is merely incestuous marriage. This curious aberration appears due to a desire to flatter royalty and the nobles who did actually practise these marriages to preserve untainted the purity of their blood and breeding. Parsis to-day, however, deny that the word in question is to be translated in this way at all.

The Penances imposed for the expiation of sins are manifold: death is the penalty for merely touching a corpse; other sins involve the recitation of the *paitita*, a sort of *Confiteor*; or a public sacrifice, an aspersion, a sort of retreat lasting nine days, or blows with an ox-goad. The tariff of these blows is worked out in the Vendîdâd in view of the various sorts of possible sins. In our own day—and doubtless this is no recent innovation—these have been replaced by penances and offerings made to priests on a similar scale of more or less. Certain crimes, however, for instance cremation and sins against nature, cannot be expiated, and make the guilty man *peshô-tanû*, "lost body," that is to say, irretrievably the prey of the Drug.

F. Religious Life and Worship.—The Zoroastrian temples—at first of the simplest possible description—contain the urn in which the holy fire burns. Over it perfumes are from time to time sprinkled, and no one approaches it save having veiled his face with

the *paitidâna*, lest his breath pollute the pure flame. Each Zoroastrian has, moreover, a sacred fire in his own house.[1]

The liturgy includes the daily recitation of a few verses of the Avesta. For this purpose the sacred book has been divided into short portions, which are arranged according to the date on which they must be recited, not according to their natural inter-relation, exactly like the gospels in our Missals. While he recites the prayers, the priest holds in his hands the *baresman*, or bundle of twigs.

Each month and each day has its patron. The chief feasts are the New Year (Persian, *naurôz*) (which has remained the greatest feast of the year in Mahometan Persia); the equinoxes, consecrated to Mithra; the *gahambars*, at the change from one season to another; the Days of the Dead at the end of the year; the days of Full Moon and of New Moon. The sacrifice consists of an oblation of bread and of *myazda*. This last term signifies *meat*, but has come to be applied to milk. Besides this, there was the sacrifice of the haôma (the Hindu *soma*), an intoxicating plant, of which the stems were crushed in a mortar and the juice strained off; this was presented before the fire and drunk by the officiating priest (Avestic, *zaotar*; Persian, *zôt*) and his acolytes (*raspi*). The priests are also called *môbeds*, which is the Avestic *mogu-paiti*, "Chief of the Magi."

A child at birth has his lips steeped in haôma, but he does not become a full Zoroastrian till, between the ages of 12 and 15 years, he receives the girdle *kushti*, which he will always wear thenceforward save at night. The presentation of this girdle forms the centre of a ceremony which lasts nine days. Marriage is a duty for the Zoroastrian, and its ritual, as celebrated to-day, is borrowed from Hindu customs. When a Zoroastrian is about to die, a dog is brought

[1] *Cf.* xiii. 9.

to his side, of which the glance is to keep at bay, for a while, the attack of the savage Drug *Nasav.* Directly the soul has left the body, Nasu seizes the corpse, which forthwith becomes impure. To elude this Drug, and to avoid contracting the worst of all defilements, the assistants lay out the corpse, their hands covered with sacking. The dead man is then carried to the *dakhma* or Tower of Silence, and there becomes the prey of impure animals. Neither water, nor earth, nor fire may be polluted by contact with a corpse.

G. ESCHATOLOGY.—For three days the soul of the Mazdean haunts his home, and then takes wing for the judgement tribunal, where it presents itself before Mithra, Sraosha, and Rashnu. Its merits and demerits are weighed in the balances.[1] If neither scale sinks, its faults counterbalance its good actions, and the soul proceeds to the *hamēstakān* or "equilibrium," a place where it will have nothing to suffer save from heat and cold. Else it must take its way to the abode of bliss, or of damnation.

In this latter case it has to cross the bridge of Chinwat, which the righteous soul finds broad and easy, while the wicked soul falls from it into the abyss. Paradise (Persian, *Behesht = Vahishta*; the most excellent) is the home of eternal light, the lovely dwelling-place of Vohu-Manah, where the souls rest upon rugs of gold.

The damned soul, however, is hurled into infernal darkness so thick that the hand can feel it. Arda Virâf, the Persian Dante, gives us, in his celebrated vision, a vivid account of what he saw in hell. He waxes eloquent over the "innumerable torments," so fearful that "he who has been but a single day in hell cries out, 'Alas! are they not over, the nine thousand years that are to pass before hell shall be opened?"

And indeed, in Mazdean eschatology hell is not

[1] *Cf.* viii. 20.

eternal. The General Resurrection is to renew the entire world. At that time a rain of molten lead shall submerge the earth, and all men, living or risen, shall be swallowed up in it. This is to be the final trial of which the Gâthâs spoke. For the righteous, it will involve no suffering, but for the guilty it shall be torture indescribable. And yet, there is not one but shall come out from thence made wholly pure, and all men shall thenceforward live together for "infinite time," in a world whence evil shall have disappeared.

. . . . . .

CONCLUSION.—Taken as a whole, the Mazdean Religion has a strong claim upon our interest, and indeed our admiration. It is among the most ancient types of systematic religion, if not the most ancient absolutely; it presents itself as essentially a *revelation* and a coherent body of *doctrine*, as do Buddhism, Mahometanism, etc., and is in sharp contrast with those "natural" religions which do not claim to have had any particular founder, but exist in the ideas and practices of a people as ancient tradition only. This characteristic at once explains the relative perfection of its teaching, and especially the *organization* of its various features. Hence, too, the abstract character which it has from the outset, and the pre-eminent position which is assigned in it to moral considerations. The further we trace them back towards their origin, the more closely similar do the religions of India and Persia appear to be, both in what touches popular beliefs, and in the ever more sublime and abstract view taken of the Âdityas and of the Ameshas-Spentas respectively.

If, however, the starting-point is identical, the lines of development have been essentially different, and that in perfect conformity with the radically diverse temperaments of the two races concerned. The imaginative Hindu, a dreamer, an ecstatic, lost him-

self in the clouds of a pantheistic mysticism, and found rest in Brahmanism and Buddhism. The Iranian, essentially a man of action, created a clear and coherent system, where all is carefully mapped out for the faithful to find no difficulty in following the path which should not only lead to the great reward beckoning to him from a hereafter of bliss, but which should carry him across this life adorned with the virtues of a good and quiet citizen, generous and laborious, a prosperous landowner and a worthy father of a family.[1]

Zoroastrianism, being a body of doctrine held as true, addresses itself, in principle at least, to all mankind. In practice, however, it remained essentially Iranian. But we know that in Persia at any rate its history was one of triumph, and was the State religion during those centuries when the Sassanid dynasty held the throne. It showed itself, during that period, most intolerant towards Christianity, and persecuted Christians savagely. In return, later history proved more cruel towards it than towards any other oriental cult. The Arabs introduced Islam into Persia as early as the seventh century; and if they did not immediately suppress the whole Mazdean cult at a blow, yet, by means of an obstinate rather than violent persecution, they first of all exhausted it, and then caused it gradually to disappear almost entirely. Persia contains to-day no more than a few thousands of pitiable Guebres. The Parsis of Bombay are now the only genuine representatives of Zoroastrianism; they were originally a group of Mazdeans who emigrated to India to avoid the Mussulman persecution. To-day they number but 70,000, and have thus perpetuated until our own times what Zoroastrianism contained of best and most inspiring.

[1] Compare the ideal of ancient Rome, xiii. p. 29, and note the absence in the Italian religion of any adequate scheme of future reward or punishment.

From the dynamic point of view, that, I mean, of the influence exerted by its ideas, Mazdeism is undoubtedly important, yet less so than might at first sight appear. The Mithraism[1] which played so startling a part in the Roman empire of the third century comes no doubt from Iran, but appears to draw its original stock of ideas from the popular religion of that country rather than from Zoroastrianism strictly so called. Moreover, it continued to assimilate a large amount of matter derived from the religions of Chaldea and of Asia Minor. Manicheism[2] did indeed popularize the dualistic principle in Europe, but it forms a highly complicated system of doctrines which are drawn from the most diverse sources.

As for the resemblances between Judaism and Mazdeism, these too appear, at first sight, more numerous than they really are. To start with, the analogies we may detect in the Gâthâs must rigorously be distinguished from those which we notice in the later parts of the Avesta and in the Pahlavi literature. As regards the latter, particularly in what concerns cult, cosmology, and eschatology, it is difficult to deny a Semitic influence upon the Iranian belief, though this influence often did no more than modify the conceptions which it found, and which go back to the oldest Persian stratum.

As for the existence of mutual influence at any very remote date, here too we must show ourselves very careful, owing to the great uncertainty which attends any effort to date the Zoroastrian scriptures. And again, if we examine the similarities on which certain scholars have dwelt, we find them less striking than we thought, and are more probably due to coincidence than to borrowing from either side. We saw above (p. 11) that this was so in the case of the "Kingdom of God." Professor Nathan Söderblom[3] has similarly

[1] *Cf.* xvi. 4–9.
[2] *Cf.* xx. 5.
[3] *La Vie Future d'après le Mazdéisme*, p. 260 *sqq.*

thrown doubt upon the opinion which contends that it was from Persia the Jews received their doctrine of a resurrection of the body. It is true that the belief in a resurrection properly so called—which is not, however, explicit in the Gâthâs—is very old in Persia; but we find it there in a rather different form from that of the Jewish belief, which, moreover, we can watch slowly developing on independent lines in Israel. The Persian demonology alone seems quite certainly to have stimulated Jewish thought upon this topic,[1] though not even here did it rob it of its independence.[2] But the name of the demon Asmodeus (who appears in Tobias) being that of a daêva, *Aeshma daêva*, well known among the satellites of Aŋro-Mainyav, it is clear that the Jews were not averse to utilizing the Mazdean demonology, which could not but develop rapidly in the religion of dualism.

In short, the similarities in question do not appear sufficiently serious to direct the attention of an apologist towards the likelihood of reciprocal influences. He will, rather, notice with interest how elevated are certain beliefs among the Aryas at a distant period when it is the fashion to portray them as given over to the worship of the forces of Nature. He will, further, observe with satisfaction that if the genuinely noble religion of Zoroaster did develop, in certain points, ideas and practices analogous to those of Judaism and Christianity, that is because it answered to the same moral exigencies of human nature. Yet these analogies, especially those of external cult and piety, only render the more striking the absence in Mazdeism—a very pure, but chiefly practical system—of that intense religious life, which alone can develop and sustain heroism.

[1] *Cf.* Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

[2] Perhaps the likeness and unlikeness of the Ameshas-Spentas to the late Jewish conception of seven superior angels "which stand before the face of God," is the best possible example at once of interdependence and independence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie, published by W. Geiger & E. Kuhn, Strassburg, 1895, and onwards. It contains scientific grammars of Iranian (general) and of Avestic (C. Bartholomae), of Middle Persian (C. Salemann), and of modern dialects. Vol. ii. contains, of high importance, (1) Avestic Literature, by K. F. Geldner; (2) Old Persian Inscriptions, by F. H. Weissbach; (3) Pahlavi Literature, by E. W. West; (4) The Iranian Epic, T. Nöldeke, etc. Also articles on the geography and history of Iran, and that of A. V. W. Jackson on the Iranian religion.

Of the best specialist works, we may quote: Grammars and Dictionaries: C. Bartholomae; *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Strassburg, 1904 (*Supplem.*, *ib.*, 1906); H. Reichelt, *Awestisches Elementarbuch*, Heidelberg, 1909; C. de Harlez, *Manuel de l'Avesta*, etc., Louvain, 1881; *Manuel du Pehlevi*, etc., Paris, 1880.

Translations: *Sacred Books of the East*, ed. Max Müller, Oxford. Vols. iv. and xxiii., Zend-Avesta i. and ii., James Darmesteter; xxxi., Zend-Avesta iii. (Yasna, Visparad, fragments), L. H. Mills; vols. v., xxiv., xxxiv., xxxvii., xlvii., Pahlavi texts, E. W. West. J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, a new translation, important introduction to vol. iii., Paris, 1892–3. C. de Harlez, *Avesta*, ed. 2, Paris, 1881. Important introduction of ccxlviii pages. L. H. Mills, the five Zoroastrian Gâthâs, etc., Leipzig, 1895. C. Bartholomae, *Die Gâthâs des Awesta*, Strassburg, 1905.

Studies of Zoroastrianism: Besides the works quoted in the text, P. Tiele, *Geschiedenis*, etc., Amsterdam, 1902. J. Darmesteter, *Études Iraniennes*, Paris, 1883. *Ormazd and Ahriman*, *ib.*, 1877. M. Haug, *Essay on the Sacred Language*, *etc.*, *of the Parsis*, London, 1878. H. Oldenberg, *Aus Indien und Iran*, Berlin, 1897.

We warmly recommend the interesting translations of short portions of the Avesta, etc., in *Leaves from my Eastern Garden*, by the Bishop of Salford, to be obtained from St. William's Press, Market Weighton, Yorks.

THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT GREECE

From the French of

J. HUBY, S.J.

INCREDIBLE as it may seem, Greece, which, with Palestine and Rome, has done more than any other nation to fashion modern Europe—modelling and remodelling our intelligence, and bequeathing an official philosophy to the Church; inventing and perfecting a Tragedy unsurpassed by any age or race; evolving artistic forms where divine majesty seems joined with all that human grace has of most exquisite—possessed a religion which, of fascinating interest in itself, has had the minimum of influence on succeeding ages. That in itself is a problem worthy of the closest attention. In these pages an attempt is made to solve it.

Now, this Greek religion was not a doctrine or a collection of rites, crystallized by the course of time into a fixed system. If identical features reappear in different periods, the variations too are profound. To get an exact idea of the whole, with its elements of change and of permanence, we must trace out its historic development. Six principal periods may be distinguished:—(1) The origins. (2) Homer. (3) Hesiod. (4) From the seventh to the end of the fifth century B.C. (5) Beginning of the decadence. (6) End of the Greek religion.

I

ORIGINS

It is only within the last fifty years that the pre-Homeric age has been opened out to historical research. Prior to that time, the mere possibility of

such a field for investigation would have been scouted by scholars to whom the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* represented the simple life of man in the very dawn of history. Now, however, thanks to antiquarian enterprise, we are enabled to see, in and behind the Greece of Homer, the existence of a brilliant Mycenean civilization (about 1500–1100 B.C.). The archæological discoveries of Schliemann at Hissarlik—the ancient Troy or Ilios (1871), at Mycenæ (1874–76), at Tiryns (1884–85) have unveiled this remoter past. At other points, too, analogous investigations have been undertaken: at Santorin, Ialysos, Spata, and at Knossos in Crete, where Dr. Arthur Evans has been working since 1900 at the excavations of the Palace of the Double Axe, the "labyrinth" of the legendary Minos (derived from Lydian *labrys*, axe?).

All these undertakings have thrown light on far-distant times hitherto undreamt of, and naturally the history of Greek religion has profited thereby. Scholars have endeavoured to define the outlines of the ancient worship which preceded Homer. Thanks to the excavations at Delos, Delphi, Eleusis, Epidauros, Dodona, local rites in historic Greece have come in for a more minute study, and have been traced up to their sources in the distant past. Still, it must be recognized that the determination of the primitive elements of Greek religion is still in a tentative stage.

The last twenty-five years have brought about a decided modification of theories formerly current. Scholars have, for the most part, abandoned Max Müller's dream of a reconstruction, by the aid of comparative grammar, of an Indo-European religion. The hypotheses of Fustel de Coulanges and of Herbert Spencer have suffered a like fate. The complex facts now coming to light fail to fit in with any rigid theory which derives all Greek religion from, *e.g.*, ancestor-worship or from hearth-worship. And the ease with which the Greeks assimilated elements

borrowed from external sources has made the question of the extraneous influences difficult to answer, and it is, in fact, still far from solution. Many scholars, however, seem to have been fascinated by the idea of establishing Oriental importations—from Egypt or Babylon—and their attempts to do so have betrayed more ingenuity than real science.

Though it is a somewhat difficult task to trace out the main lines of primitive Greek religion as far as history reveals it, still some attempt may be made. Without trying to solve the complicated problem of the early migrations of the Greeks, our study will begin after their settlement on the European continent. *Cf.* Lagrange, *La Crète Ancienne*, p. 135; etc.

STONE-WORSHIP.—Starting with less striking forms, we may note as very ancient the *worship of stones.* Some of these sacred stones were reputed to have fallen from heaven, and the tradition of this ancient cult lasted very long in Greece. Even in historic times, in 405 B.C., an aerolite which fell in the Chersonnese became at once an object of worship. In the second century A.D. sacred stones of this kind in Greek temples are described by Pausanias, some of them carved, others in their natural state, suggesting by their rough symbolism the Asiatic *bætylæ.* According to Pausanias and his contemporaries, these stones were symbols or rough-hewn statues of divinities; in some such shape at Hyettos, thus it was Heraklês who was adored; at Paphos, a conical stone figured Aphrodité; a black rock, gorgeously dressed, was the great mother of Pessinus. The primordial conception seems here to have been that of fetich-worship. The aerolite was supposed to be animated by some supernatural spirit, and whoever possessed it had a sure talisman against rain, storm, or sickness. *Cf.* L. i. 4; xiii. 3, 16.

TREE-WORSHIP.—These traces of stone-worship lead us to inquire as to the existence of *tree-worship* among the ancient Greeks. The practice of succeeding ages

tells us of many "sacred" trees. Not to speak of those which were specially sacred to particular divinities—as the oak to Zeus, the olive to Athené—others were venerated as the abode of gods. The Hamadryads dwelt in oaks, the Meliæ in ash-trees. According to the more general conception, they were incorporated with the tree they lived in, and died with it. This worship goes back to very early times. Homer, it is true, does not employ the term "Hamadryad," but, besides the deities of fountains and rivers, he mentions under the general term of "Nymphs" the goddesses that people fields and shady woods. Gruppe derives the worship of trees from another very ancient cult, that of fire: the veneration of the fire would be extended to the tree which was its food. This connection is far from evident. Worship of trees is more simply explained by the tendency to personify and deify the productive forces of nature, a tendency extraordinarily pronounced among the Greeks. To them, Humanity and, indeed, the Human Form, was everything. The moment they were aware of a Force, an Element, a natural phenomenon of any sort, they at once *visualized* what they had vaguely felt, and clothed the immaterial fact in flesh. Wholly different was the attitude of the inartistic, unimaginative Roman (see Lecture xiii., pp. 4, 7, etc.), who left his divinities sexless and shapeless, and evolved no mythology worth mentioning—and no art, till the Greek taught him. The sense of *life in nature* was thus responsible for much Greek worship and many Greek gods. We can watch, in vase-paintings, the impression that, *e.g.* in all *moist fruits*, a special Force or Spirit is at work, gradually taking human form. At first we see the tree-trunk honoured; then it is surmounted by a human head; then the half-human effigy is clothed and decked out with symbolical fruits of all descriptions; finally the god himself is recognized, independent and complete, and can be

identified, in this case, with the northern god of intoxicants and springtime, Dionysos.

ANIMAL-WORSHIP. — Certain *animals*, too, were regarded as sacred by the Greeks, as is evidenced by survivals of this cult down to historic times. Serpents stand out especially as objects of worship. Such, for instance, was the *oichouros ophis* of the Acropolis at Athens, to which an offering of honey-cakes was made each month. Serpents were particularly associated with the worship of Asklepios: this was the form chosen by the god of medicine in revealing himself to his clients. Other gods had their favourite animals. The eagle is the bird of Zeus, the owl of Athené, and the dove is sacred to Aphrodité. In representations, the god and the animal sacred to him were often placed side by side. Some Athenian coins display Athené on one side, and an owl on the other. At other times we find a single monstrous figure of god and animal combined, suggesting the images of Horus or Isis of Egypt. Schliemann believed he had discovered in the ruins of Ilios some owl-headed effigies of Athené. Pausanias mentions an Arcadian Demêter with the head and mane of a horse. Are these the survivals of an animal fetichism? The supporters of totemist theories maintain that they are; but decisive evidence is wanting. The fact of the horse or bull being sacred to Poseidon does not necessarily point to a primitive cult of a Poseidon-Horse or a Poseidon-Bull. It is enough that Poseidon was an *Earth-god*, the god of the fields on which horses or bulls were pastured. These questions of origin are so obscure that it may be argued that the supposed totems are merely *symbolic* animals, "*crests*,"—though here again we think that the Greek anthropomorphizing tendency is visible, and that, *e.g.*, the "making of a goddess"[1] out of the *Vital Force*

[1] *Cf.* Miss J. E. Harrison's picturesque, though not wholly trustworthy, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, c. vi. etc.

at work in all *wild animals*, can with certainty be verified. Paintings once more reveal to us the barely human figure of a woman, surrounded and covered with forms of all manner of wild beasts and birds and even fishes, developing into the full "anthropomorphic" presentment of a goddess, who might then be recognized in the certainly imported divinity Artemis. The religious value attached to certain animals—originally, as we hinted, especially precious, for some reason, to the tribe to which they belonged—survives in a class of sacrifices when some privilege (often citizenship) depends on participation in a banquet on the flesh of the slain animal; or in many quaint rites which demand that the worshippers should clothe themselves with the skin of the slaughtered beast and call themselves, often, by its name, in order to display their mystical identification with it, and, thereby, with the tribal or family god.[1]

CULT OF THE DEAD.—Even in the earliest strata we find the cult of the *dead*. Archæology supplies us with valuable details on the Mycenean age. Many tombs have been found—shaft-graves, rock-tombs, "bee-hive" tombs—scattered over the face of Greece, *e.g.* at Mycenæ, Vaphio (Laconia), Menidi (Attica), Orchomenos (Bœotia), Dimini (Thessaly). Several facts are clear from these discoveries. The corpses were generally buried without embalming, and, contrary to the Homeric custom, without cremation. The Greeks believed in an at least partial survival of their dead, and they honoured them by numerous offerings. The bones and horns of bulls, found either inside or at the entrance to tombs, can only be the remains of holocausts. In the vestibules of the rock-tombs of Mycenæ, even human bones are found in such quantities that Perrot supposes sacrifices of captives or of slaves; and if this appear astonishing, we need

[1] *Cf. infra*, pp. 23, 24; and Lecture xiii., pp. 11, 12, where a fuller account of this double ritual is given.

only recall that in the *Iliad* (xxiii. 175, 176) Achillês slew twelve Trojans on the tomb of Patroklos. To sacrifices were added numerous gifts, constituting often a complete burial equipment—arms, jewels, gold and silver vessels. These offerings were not confined to the actual obsequies, but were frequently renewed. The cult had a family character: at Mycenæ, as M. Tsountas has remarked, the tombs are not scattered about, but form distinct groups, with an altar of large stones in the centre for sacrifices. It seems fair to see in these funeral rites the germ of that hero-worship which was to develop so largely from the seventh century onwards. The February feast of the *Anthesteria* was doubtless evolved from these most primitive conceptions of the continued life of the ghosts within the tomb, and of their periodical marauding expeditions. On the last of its three days a solemn *expulsion* of the Kêres or malicious spirits took place. "Out of doors, ye Ghosts; the festival is over!" was the formula sung by the whole family over the meal set out, in the porch, that the invading ghosts might taste it and come no further. The spirit of this ceremony is identical with that of the *Lemuria* (Lecture xiii., p. 13), and of early religion generally and of Greek in particular, which we cannot be wrong in believing to have regarded the "other-world" powers, gods and ghosts, as presumably ill-disposed and to be got rid of or appeased.

THE GODS.—Our backward glance over the origins of Greek religion brings us, in conclusion, to the anthropomorphic or human-shaped gods. In Homer we find this conception of gods in the form of exalted men already quite definite and precise. Clearly, the religion of the epic, with its presumably familiar legends, and its gods characterised by stereotyped formulas, was not the spontaneous product of the poet's mind; like the epic itself, it supposes a lengthy period of elaboration. From archæological discoveries

we are able to conclude that the Greeks had begun, before Homer's time, to clothe their divinities in human forms. In Crete, the archæologist Karo has found representations of the *God of the Sky*, with the two-headed axe—symbol of power—and of the *Mother of Gods and Men*, a primitive conception of the Græco-Phœnician Rhea-Cybelé.[1]

There is no doubt that, prior to Homer, the Greeks made no distinction between the gods of Olympus and the *chthonian* or earth-gods. These last seem to have been specially honoured by the Bœotian and Doric groups. In Homer, who represents first and foremost the Ionian civilization, the Olympian deities plainly assert their supremacy, and the earth-gods are relegated to the background. This, however, was only a temporary effacement. Worship paid to divinities of the earth and of vegetation was to persist in the popular religion of the agricultural classes till the time when the "Mysteries" should breathe new life into it. *Cf. infra*, pp. 20, 21.

As a conclusion from this first portion of our sketch, it may be asserted that neither archæological nor linguistic evidence points to any gradual evolution of the Greek religion, as passing from the lower forms of fetichism to a loftier conception. At the earliest period of which we have any knowledge, the gods adored are celestial and immortal beings.

II

Homer (*between the end of the ninth and first half of the eighth century*)

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not a didactic treatise on mythology—the work of a man who is careful to co-ordinate and explain methodically the legends he narrates. Yet the Homeric epic, read and re-read by succeeding generations, exercised a vital influence on

[1] No trace of real *temples* exists in Crete or Mycenæ.

the religious ideas of the Greeks. The religion of Homer is, so to speak, the full bloom of anthropomorphism. We are constantly reminded, now by an epithet, now by a couple of lines, that this anthropomorphism is due to naturalistic conceptions. Thus the earth is the "broad-bosomed goddess," or again, "the goddess of the spacious ways"; there seems to be but a vague distinction between Hestia, the hearth-goddess, and the fire itself; and in the 21st book of the Iliad there is a picture of the river-god Xanthos, in full flood, raging against Achillês, who had filled his channel with corpses. Alongside of these distant echoes of a religion of nature, the gods are fashioned after a well-defined anthropomorphic model, which in succeeding times was to be to the Greek mind the necessary form of its mythological conceptions.

The gods of Homer are, then, idealized men. They are simply "glorified" mortals, with human form, countenance, and limbs; while in their veins flows a mysterious fluid that renders them deathless. More powerful than heroes, and swifter in their movements, they can at will become visible or invisible. They live undying lives in heaven, in the palaces built for them by Hephaistos—splendid abodes where they pass a delightful existence in an eternal springtime. But great though these gods be, none the less are they imperfect beings. They had a beginning in time, and their life is subject to the succession of days, months, and years. They need food to live, nectar and ambrosia. Though secure from death, they are liable to wounds and to suffering.

The divine limitations are no less apparent when we turn to the moral shortcomings of the gods. They have their passions, their amours, their local patriotism. All engage ardently in human struggles, and the qualities attributed to them by Homer are not always to their credit. Apollo kills Patroklos by treachery.

Athené meanly deceives Hektor. In the heat of combat Apollo hurls at Arês the epithets, "Bane of men, foul murderer, highway robber!" Helen might have urged, as some excuse for her adultery, the story of Arês and Aphrodité, a narrative so popular that the poet tells it twice.

Homer's Olympus is organized as a monarchy. At the head reigns Zeus, the sovereign god, whose nod shakes the world. Below him are ranged in order the other gods and goddesses—Hera, wife of Zeus; Athené, his favourite daughter; Arês, the god of war; Phoibos Apollo; Hermês; Hephaistos, the handy, halting blacksmith; the golden Aphrodité. Besides Zeus, there are two other sons of Kronos, Poseidon and Hadês, who hold sway, the one over the Sea, the other over the Lower World, but subject alike to the sovereignty of Zeus.

Another power mentioned by Homer, closely bound up and interwoven with that of the gods, is the power of Destiny (*Moira* or *Aisa*). The question of the relation supposed to exist between Zeus and Destiny is often raised, but a clear answer is not easy to find; indeed, it would not be natural to expect clean-cut distinctions of this kind in a poem which is not a formal dissertation, nor indeed, in its entirety, the work of a single writer.

From a general survey of the poem, Moira appears to be that power which settles the destiny of all beings, especially the destiny of each man, and, more particularly, the time and manner of his death. Hence the frequent association of *Moira* and *Thanatos* (Death). In some places the former word stands simply for the concrete, particular idea of inevitable death.

But who fixed this stern destiny which awaits unfortunate mortals? Is it a mere personified force? Or is it the law uttered by Zeus in virtue of his sovereign will? Some understand it to be a trans-

cendent Power, to which Zeus himself is surbordinate; but this hardly fits in with some passages, such as that in the 16th book of the Iliad (433–461), where we have a description of Zeus' emotion on seeing his son Sarpedon reduced to the last extremity in his combat with Patroklos. While the love of Zeus does not in fact save the Lykian hero, still we are not left to conclude that the Father of gods and men is absolutely incapable of changing destiny. For the words of Zeus himself (433–438) imply a contrary conclusion:— "Alas, alas! for I see 'tis Fate that Sarpedon, dearest of men, should, beneath Patroklos, son of Menoitios, be slain; and in two ways my heart is fain, and I struggle in soul—shall I snatch him aloft, yet living, from fearful battle and set him in the fat deme of Lykia, or shall I forthwith, beneath the hands of the son of Menoitios, slay him?" Hera blames Zeus for this indecision, and death is allowed to have its way. A similar incident occurs at the death of Hektor, where Athené, in her turn, recognizes in Zeus the power to deliver Hektor from the might of Achillês (xxii. 179–180).

Most modern writers, following Welcker, identify "Fate" with the will of the gods, notably of Zeus. The contradiction which appears when the death of heroes is ascribed, now to the inevitable decree of Moira, and now to the not less inevitable decree of the gods, disappears if we admit the identity of these two determining agencies. Still, this theory does not solve all difficulties. It remains hard to account for Zeus' apprehensiveness in regard to Moira, and for the fact that, practically speaking, he gives way, and dares not cheat death of his cherished Hektor and Sarpedon. Consistency might be attained if we regarded Moira as a providential dispensation, fixed by Zeus once for all, and from which, out of respect for established order, he is unwilling to make any departure. But this solution perhaps attributes to

Homer too deep a philosophy and too great preciseness of conception. It is quite sufficient, and more probable, to suppose in the mind of Homer, or the Homeric writers, two conflicting ideas—on the one hand a kind of fatalism, derived probably from popular belief, and on the other, a confused notion of divine Providence.

One last element in the Homeric religion must be indicated—belief in a future life. The Greeks of this epoch imagined the soul to be a material principle, a subtle vapour, united with the body till, at the moment of death, it stole away, retaining the shape and image of the dead person, but a pale and bloodless wraith, intangible to the living. This phantom betakes itself to the domain of Hadês, to which, however, admission is gained only on condition of the body having been buried. As soon as the funeral rites are completed, there open to the disembodied soul the gates of the Lower Regions. These, according to the Odyssey, are situated far away in the west, beyond the dark country of the Cimmerians, at the remote limits of the deep ocean.

What is the condition of souls in the subterranean Erebos? Nothing can give a clearer idea of this than the lament of dead Achillês to Odysseus (*Odyssey*, xi. 489):—"But for death, strive not thou to comfort me, glorious Odysseus; it were my wish, being but upon earth, to be serf unto another, even unto a lack-land wight that had but little living, rather than to be king over all the dead departed!" Of what was once a man there remains but a shade, dragging out a meaningless existence, without memory or reason. If a gleam of intelligence ever stirs in that pallid countenance, it is gained only by devouring the raw flesh or drinking the blood of black cattle.

Whatever may have been a man's life on earth, Hadês has for him neither reward nor yet a personal

chastisement. We are told of but three criminals who were subjected to tortures beyond what were the common lot—Tityos, Tantalos, and Sisyphos; and all these, probably, for outrages against the gods. Of a happy future existence we have but one instance (*Od.*, iv. 561–568). Proteus announces to Menelaos that he will not die, but will be borne away, body and soul, by the gods to the Elysian fields, where "There is nor snow, nor stormy wind, nor any rain, but ever the breezes of the west wind blowing shrill doth ocean send up to give refreshment unto men." The reason for this privileged treatment was not the heroic virtue of Menelaos, but his kinship with Zeus. All other mortals are, without exception, doomed to the mournful and gloomy and monotonous existence of Erebos.

We cannot, however, deny that, in the latest parts of Homer, a spirit of frivolous scepticism is discernible, introduced by the luxurious and worldly school of Ionian poets, which gives to the scenes where gods and goddesses are met with, a flavour (as Dr. Gilbert Murray excellently expresses it, in his *Rise of the Greek Epic*) "of Palais Royal farce."

III

Hesiod (*between* 800 *and* 700 B.C.)

After Homer, the epic poets strove to fix the floating legends of heroes found throughout the Greek world, and to present to their countrymen the complete cycle of these marvellous tales. Hesiod's *Theogony* is a response to these scientific aspirations after order and arrangement: it is an attempt to synthesize the legends of the gods. In a work that is didactic in character, the author draws up the genealogies of the gods from the beginning of things down to the actual reign of Zeus.

To start with, we have four beings: Chaos, which is probably empty space; Gaia or Earth; Tartaros, in the depths of the earth; and lastly Erôs (Love). From Chaos comes Erebos (Darkness) and Nûx (Night); from these last, Hemera (Day) and Æther (Luminous Air). Gaia brings forth Ouranos (Heaven), the Mountains, and Pontos (Ocean). From her union with Ouranos come a multitude of deities—the Titans, the Cyclôpês, the hundred-armed Giants. Then comes a first revolt, provoked by the cruelty of Ouranos to his children, whom he had entombed in the depths of the earth, and he is dethroned by Kronos. At this point the poet starts a fresh division in the series of divine generations. From his motley array, two families are made to stand out prominently, the Titans and the Kronidês, born of Rhea and Kronos. There is a brief contest for the sceptre of Olympus. Zeus overthrows his father Kronos, and when his own power is threatened by the Titans, he succeeds by the help of the hundred-armed giants in hurling his enemies into Tartaros. A final victory over the monster Typhoëus assures his triumph, and nothing remains for the poet but to chronicle the birth of the later Olympians.

Such is the theogony which stands for the first essays of the Greeks at a cosmogony—crude enough when compared with the grand simplicity presented by the first chapter of Genesis. It had, for the Greeks, at least the merit of giving a genealogical unity to their bewildering host of divinities, and of being a convenient and handy table of reference.

IV

From 600 to 300 B.C.

The pronounced anthropomorphism of Homer, together with the ascendancy of the "Olympian" over

the "Earth" gods, were two characteristics to which the classical literature and art of succeeding times gave a stereotyped permanence. The artistic influence issued in a general, official mythology on comprehensively Hellenic lines. This "All-Greek" Pantheon was not constituted without some "give and take" between the great Olympian gods and the local "Earth" gods. Often enough the Olympians are found with elements originally not theirs, but borrowed from the gods whom they displaced. Thus Hera, who in Homer is a celestial divinity, was adored at Olympia as an "Earth" goddess.

The Greeks were not much concerned to eliminate all inconsistency from this medley of diverse elements, or to harmonize discordant legends. There was no authority to impose a uniform profession of faith, no "ministry" to teach an exact theology. Hence much fluctuation in ideas, and great freedom left to the individual or national fancy. Titles of a single divinity would vary so that the Greeks themselves became confused. Thus Xenophon (*Symposium*, viii. 9) makes Socratês unable to say whether there be "one Aphrodité, or two—the common Aphrodité and the heavenly Aphrodité." Even individuals in the same community never considered themselves tied down to a uniform interpretation of mythology. Legends are freely altered in obedience to the vanity of aristocrats, the fancy of the artist, or the speculations of the philosopher. In one respect, however, the Greeks were resolutely conservative, and that was in the observance of traditional rites. To practise these rites according to ancestral usage was to be religious; to seek to change or destroy them left a man exposed to the charge of impiety, and "the rigour of the law."

If we once realize the liberal canons of interpretation among the Greeks, and their untiring creation of myths, it is easy to appreciate how difficult it is

to synthesize the attributes of any one divinity, to reduce them to a single root-idea from which subsequent legends sprang up. It must suffice for us to sketch in outline the chief divinities of historic Greece, exhibiting their most outstanding features.

ZEUS is eminently the god of Hellenism, raised by worship and poetry alike to the supreme rank. As Lord of Heaven, his dwelling is in the sublime regions beyond the clouds, and his favourite place of worship is the unclouded mountain-top. From his glorious abode, he rules the celestial phenomena, commands the snow and the rain, and armed with the thunderbolt, forged by Cyclôpês, he has the storms at his back. From the moral standpoint, he has all the qualities proper to the Father of gods and men. He is the god who presides over birth, home, family, town; the god of friendship and hospitality, of arms and triumphs; the absolver and avenger; the refuge of suppliants. All-powerful and all-wise, he knows the future, and reveals it by oracles. Yet this majestic nature of his lies hid behind many a dark shade. He has his history, like all Greek gods; he is born and grows up, and gains power by violence. His after-career is crowded with varied episodes, and the divine legends are filled with amorous adventures, revoltingly immoral. *Cf.* Lecture xiii. 15.

HERA.—The power of Zeus is shared by his wife Hera, who, being the daughter of Kronos and Rhea, is his sister too. Her cult flourished especially at Argos and in the Peloponnesus, and men worshipped in her the divinity that watched over marriage. The "sacred marriage" is the dominant feature in her cult, and by many this curious piece of ritual is thought to have perpetuated the memory of a primitive fusion of two cults, Greek (that of Zeus), and pre-Greek (that of Hera), just as the legends of the defeat by Zeus of his predecessors, and of the earth-born Titans, recall the actual contests through which the

worship of the invading Greeks won its supremacy over the more barbaric cults which flourished before their coming. *Cf.* Lecture xiii. 16.

ATHENÉ.—Athené, the favourite daughter of Zeus, has pre-eminent honour among the Ionians, especially in Attica. According to the Homeric hymns, she came forth, arrayed in full armour, from the head of Zeus. This legend has been regarded as an indication of the originally naturalistic character of the goddess, some mythologists considering the Athené must have been the goddess of storms, of the lightning that cleaves the storm-clouds; while to others she is the goddess of the Æther, whether bright or clouded. There is no clear suggestion of such ideas to be found in her *worship*; and the attributes with which the Greek imagination clothed her were of the moral and political order. She is worshipped as the protectress of cities and citadels. She is the Virgin Warrior, and receives the spoils of victorious expeditions. She has her functions too in the internal polity of the city; she watches over its trades, its commerce, its industry and crafts. In Attica, the country's main source of wealth, olive-culture, was committed to her charge; and in the city of Athens the person of Athené attained its greatest height of veneration and prestige. Sailors entering the Piræus could see her colossal statue dominating the Acropolis, and hail her as the ideal personification of their city's vigour and intellectual activity.

APOLLO.—Another god who must be numbered with Athené amongst the most powerful gods of the Greek world is Apollo, son of Zeus and Latôna. He was a god with a host of attributes. Whilst in the more distant rural districts of Arcadia and Laconia he was the god of shepherds and green fields, Ionians of Delos hailed him as the god who presided over poetry and art, the Master of Muses and of Graces. Sometimes he is distinct from Helios, the Sun-god;

sometimes, again, though not before the sixth century, identified with him. At Delphi he is the oracle, ever reverently listened to as he utters the messages received by him in person from Zeus. It would take us beyond the scope of this paper to describe the character or history of the Oracle-shrines of which Delphi was among the chief. It is, however, not too much to say that the Delphi oracle was the only influence which we might have expected to weld into a religious unity the little, isolated, mountain-girt Greek states, tenacious as they were of the peculiar cults of god and hero which gave a local colour to that of the chief God, Zeus, himself. To Delphi, as to the one place where divine power was believed to be most immediately manifested, all eyes were inclined to turn. But its money-making propensities and unfortunate interference in politics discredited it, and its downfall was rapid, and easy to follow in contemporary history.

ARTEMIS.—Artemis was, like Apollo, born of Latôna, at least according to the epic and lyrical traditions. As companion to her brother, she has been identified with Hecaté, and Selené, the Moon-goddess, the earliest evidence of this connection being found, according to Roscher, in Æschylus (*c.* 490 B.C.). She is, in her primitive portrayals, a goddess of fecundity, a patroness of the open country and wild animals. She follows the chase in forest and mountain. As a virgin goddess, she is protectress of virginity and of chaste wedlock. Her cult in Asia Minor naturally became modified by contact with the worship of Astarté and Cybelé, and the Ephesian Artemis adopted the sensual rites of the Oriental divinities.

APHRODITÉ.—Oriental influence was still more profoundly evident in the worship of Aphrodité. The Aphrodités of Cyprus and of Cythêra were originally Semitic Astartés, and it may be questioned if the Greeks, before coming into contact with the East, had a native Aphrodité at all. They had appropriated,

moreover, from the Phœnicians the myth of Adonis, the beautiful youth beloved of Aphrodité, who dies and is born again each year—the personification of the cereals, the ripe corn, laid low by the sickle. *Cf.* Lecture xiv. 13, 14; vii. 23; vi. 5.

ARÊS, ETC.—Among the great deities must also be reckoned Arês, the god of war, probably of Thracian origin; Hermês, god of flocks and of fertility, who appears in the 24th Book of the Iliad as the Herald of Zeus, and in the 24th of the Odyssey as the guide of souls to the nether world; Hadês and Persephoné, the god and goddess of the dead; and the gods who presided over the mysteries of Eleusis—Demêter, goddess of Earth the Nourisher, Koré her daughter, and Dionysos, god of wine and vegetation. Beneath the waters of the sea reigned Poseidon, who seems to have been originally honoured in Bœotia as god of the subterranean forces and of earthquakes. Horses and bulls were sacred to him; and his connection with the sea is a later development. Various explanations of this new attribute of his have been hazarded, but it is perhaps due simply to the fact that the special devotees of Poseidon were the first tribes to venture on maritime enterprise.

MINOR DEITIES.—Below the greater divinities we find a multitude of minor gods—terrifying, like the Furies, or gracious and gentle like the Wood-nymphs and River-nymphs and Fountain-nymphs, the fifty Nereids, and the three thousand Oceanids; and beings, half-god, half-brute, *e.g.* Pan and his inseparable Silênus and Satyrs (survivals of Mycenean demons?).

HERO-WORSHIP.—The history of the seventh and sixth centuries displays a widespread worship of "heroes." The epic had magnified and idealized these personages, and the practice of worshipping the dead had brought about a special veneration of more illustrious ancestors. From this it was but a step, not long in being taken, to make gods of them. Political events favoured

these apotheoses. In Greece the population was grouped in separate communities, and, outside Greece, colonies were founded on the shores of Asia Minor, in the Chersonnese, in Thrace, Sicily, South Italy or "Greater Greece." The new communities had to find an ancestry. Thus Diomedês had his sanctuaries and his feasts at Argyrippos and Metapontos in Greater Greece, Adrastês in Sicyon, Helen and Menelaos in Sparta, Theseus in Attica, Achillês on the shores of the Black Sea, and, most celebrated of all, Heraklês, the national hero of the Dorians. *Cf.* Lect. xv. 2, 30.

POPULAR FESTIVALS. — While poetry and art lavished their treasures especially on the Olympian gods, and local patriotism made much of the "heroes," the worship of the "Earth-gods" and of the Dead continued to show signs of vigorous life, manifested in various feasts of a distinctly popular character. Attic peasants honoured Demêter by the *Haloa* at the fruit-harvest, by the *Proërosia* in dedication of toil, by the *Chloeia* at the ripening of their crops. Other cantons of Greece had analogous feasts—at seed-time, blossoming-time, and vintage. We trace here clear survivals from the earliest forms of Greek worship. Just as in the oldest Latin festivals, these rituals are barely connected with developed gods and goddesses: they are worship *done* rather than *paid*: they are related as closely to magic as to religion: their object is immediate and practical—the aversion of evil from fields and homes, and, gradually, the obtaining of prosperity. They included nearly always much purification, including fasting, and (with the relentless logic of a very primitive people) the eating of strong purgative herbs. This, which typified and ensured the riddance of present evil, was often followed by a mystic participation in those things (grain, for instance, and fruits) for which prosperity was being invoked during the coming season, or at least by a procession of sacred objects, symbolical in one way or another of

fertility. In some cases the spirit of fecundity or of the year's strength, which periodically waned in winter and returned in the spring, was represented by the actual enclosure of a girl in a vault, which was ritually sealed, and from which she emerged after a space. In mythology, this notion clothed itself in the charming story of Koré (=the Maiden), who was ravished by the God of the under-world and of death, was sought for, with tears, by her sorrowing mother Demêter (=Earth-mother), and restored to life for a fixed period each year. All this must be compared with the similar worships prevalent in Asia, where, *e.g.*, the young Adonis yearly died and was restored to life (*cf.* Lecture xiv., pp. 10, 14); the fruit-god Dionysos was held himself to die yearly, and the women of Delphi, each mid-winter, waving a cradle, called him back to life.

As to the dead, despite the poetic tradition which relegated them to a nether world, cut off from the living, they continued in honour among the people as though *residing* in their tombs. The 30th day of the month was consecrated to them; on this day, as on the days of their birth and death, their tombs were sprinkled with libations of wine, of milk, and of honey, or of honey and milk mixed together. At Athens, the fifth day of Boëdromion (September) was kept as a feast for all the dead.

MYSTERIES.—Finally, the sixth century witnessed the development, side by side with the national and public religion, of secret religions, practised by the initiated alone. The Greek mind, on awakening to the problems of philosophy and science, became dissatisfied with the answers given by the traditional mythology. Orphism and the Mysteries appeared in response to the new intellectual curiosity and religious aspiration. *Cf.* Lecture xii. 3.

The most celebrated of the Greek Mysteries were those of Eleusis. They took place each year, and

included two distinct groups of feasts—the *Lesser Mysteries*, in the month Anthesterion (February), and the *Great Mysteries* or *Eleusinia*, in the month Boëdromion (September). These solemnities were presided over by the gods Demêter, Koré (her daughter), and Dionysos.

The Lesser Mysteries took place at Agra, a suburb of Athens. They were, says the scholiast of Aristophanes, the necessary preliminary to initiation in the Great Mysteries. All we know of them is that they were preceded by a purification, which took place on the banks of the Ilissos. Whether the remaining ceremonial consisted merely of a special instruction by the *Mystagogos* (initiator), or included also some dramatic representations, is a matter about which we can only conjecture.

After this preparation, the candidates received at the Great Mysteries the revelations which constituted the real initiation, after which they were counted in the number of the *mystæ*. After a year's interval they could present themselves for the higher grade, the *Epoptia*. Any Greek, even a slave, might procure initiation in classical times — criminals and "barbarians" or foreigners alone excluded.

In the following attempt to reconstruct the sacred ordinal of the ceremonies, we follow in the main the works of Foucart.

On the 14th Boëdromion certain sacred objects were carried from Eleusis to Athens, to the sanctuary of the Eleusinion. On the 15th took place a meeting of the *mystæ* in the Stoä Poikilé (or "National Portrait Gallery," so to call it, of Athens), close to the Eleusinion. Two of the chief dignitaries, the *hierophant* and the *dadouchos* (torch-carrier), made the "proclamation," reciting the conditions of admission to the mysteries, the exclusion of criminals, of the sacrilegious, of murderers, and of foreigners. Candidates were bound to absolute secrecy. On

the 16th the *mystæ* went to the sea-shore, and plunged into the water, which had the effect of purifying all uncleanness. Each bore with him and washed in the water the sucking pig which he was later to sacrifice to Demêter. After two days spent in the observance of fasts and abstinence, as prescribed by the *mystagogi*, the initiated went in procession from Athens to Eleusis. With sacred songs and loud cries, they bore in triumph the sacred objects and the statue of Iacchos, a young god of obscure origin, but identified with Dionysos, and probably a tradition handed down from the time of the Peisistratidai (*c.* 500 B.C.). The procession reached Eleusis in the evening. Our information as to the number of days spent there is uncertain, as also the scheme of the ceremonies. There is mention of sacrifices to various divinities. After certain purifications and fasts, the initiated consumed the *kykeon* (a dish of mingled grains and vegetables). And finally they spent a night assisting at the mysterious spectacular displays, which took place at the entrance or in the interior of the temple of Demêter. A first drama represented the legend of the rape of Koré, and the wanderings of Demêter in search of her daughter. Foucart and Lenormant add another drama, the sacred nuptials of Zeus and Demêter, but this supposition is not supported by sufficient evidence. Besides the dramatic exhibitions there was a display of sacred objects. The body of the temple was in complete darkness, when suddenly the doors of the sanctuary were thrown open, and the *hierophant*, a royal fillet on his brow, exposed the sacred objects to the assembled *mystæ* in a flood of light. As to the nature of these objects we have no certain information. It is conjectured with some probability that they comprised, along with certain mysterious accessories, the statues of the two goddesses Demêter and Koré, which had been veiled during the procession, and now suddenly, in a

blaze of light, were exposed to the gaze of the initiated.

The calculated effect of all these spectacles, presented to their eyes in a gorgeous *mise en scène*, was to inspire the initiated with an assurance of a blessed existence in the after-life. This conviction was instilled, not by any dogmatic instruction, nor by the revelation of esoteric doctrines, but by dramatic exhibitions, which impressed the senses and struck the imagination, and by purificatory rites which made the initiated more pleasing to the gods, and worthy to form in the other world those blessed choirs described by Aristophanês.

Besides the Eleusinia, there were other Mysteries known to the Greeks—the Orphic Mysteries, the Dionysiac Mysteries, the Cabeiria, and the Mysteries of Sabazios. The generally essential elements of each were purifications, sacrifices, revelations of sacred formulas, and rites that varied with the different Mysteries. One of the most notable of these was the Orphic rite of the Omophagia; the initiated cut pieces off a living bull and devoured them, thinking thus to attain to a closer union with their god, Dionysos Zagreus.

V

Beginning of the Decadence

No visitor to Athens in the middle of the fifth century B.C., who witnessed the monuments raised on the Acropolis by Pheidias, Mnesiklês and Iktinos, to the glory of Zeus and Athené, would have suspected that the golden age of religious art, in which he found himself, was coincident with a decided decadence in the traditional mythology. Yet the ancient religion was beginning to lose its hold, at least on the more cultivated minds. The first adversaries of mythology were the philosophers. *Cf.* Lecture xii. 4 *sqq.*

Greek philosophy, in fact, from its first rise broke with the sacred traditions, and constructed its systems without concern for the preservation of religion. Unlike the civilizations of the East, in which powerful schools of theology, as in Babylon or Heliopolis, kept renovating and putting new life into religious thought, mythology in Greece, in the classical period, gained nothing from philosophic reflection. Such thinkers as refrained from attacking it held themselves completely aloof from it; and religion, from lack of some quickening principle, necessarily became a dry formalism, a mere collection of rites, void of meaning. As Cumont well expresses it, "Never had so cultured a people so childish a religion."

The first Ionians, Thalês, Anaximander and Anaximenês, and the Pythagorean school, had observed a certain neutrality. The Eleätic school, on the other hand, was frankly aggressive. Xenophanês expressly denies the anthropomorphic conception of the Divinity, and substitutes in its place the *One*, unproduced and imperishable. This movement, rising in the sixth century, was carried on in the second half of the fifth century by the Sophists, *i.e.* the purveyors, in the late fifth century, of general education for the Greeks. Under their influence, there spread in the upper circles at Athens, among the *jeunesse dorée* of the time, a rather crude scepticism, which could not fail to have its effect on religion. Protagoras openly taught agnosticism. "As to the gods," he said, "I can say nothing as to whether they are, or are not." Gorgias asserted principles leading to absolute nihilism: "There is nothing—or if there exist aught, it is unknowable."

Poetry, which had contributed so powerfully to establishing the mythological legends and conciliating the various traditions, became in Euripidês the handmaid of sophistry. At times the legends of gods or heroes are attacked by the poet, when they appear to

him to contradict good sense or morals; at other times a vague scepticism is made to pervade the whole scheme of religion. Most variable is his conception of Zeus, the chief god of the Hellenic religion. He appears to be identified variously with *necessity*, with *human intellect*, or with the infinite luminous Æther enveloping the world. A fragment also of the philosopher Melanippos gives a hint of agnosticism, which may well have been the root-principle of his thought.

These attacks provoked various reactions in the Greek mind, which are interesting to observe. A few, as Pindar, retained their attachment to the traditional mythology, endeavouring to strengthen its weak points. A few unpleasing myths were suppressed, the ideal of divine perfection was purified and spiritualised. There was some advance in the idea of a future life, and there appeared an other-world sanction, imperfect though it was. Æschylus, too, retained a profoundly religious spirit. He never wearies of exalting Zeus, "the Lord of Lords, blessed among the blessed, powerful beyond the powerful." On the other hand, if we think of Pindar's celebrated line, "What is God? What is He not? He is all"; and of the Æschylæan fragment of the *Heliades*, "Zeus is the æther, Zeus is the earth, Zeus is the heaven, Zeus is all and beyond all," we seem to see, in the minds of both poets, a strong current setting in the direction of a naturalistic pantheism, or a Stoic monism. Others retained a cloudless serenity. Sophoclês, the "kindly Sophoclês," is the type of the soul that remains in tranquil possession of its ancestral faith. And certainly there could be found many such among the people of Athens in the fifth century. For them, Aristophanês might laugh at their gods; he must not deny them. Religious and political rancour was still easily aroused against any who were reputed innovators. In 414 a decree put a price on the head

of Diagoras for his atheism; in 411 Protagoras was banished from Athens, and his writings burnt in the Agora; in 399 Socratês was condemned to drink the hemlock.

The danger was less if philosophic speculation was combined with respect for established usage. Thus Plato's ideal city had its gods and even its oracles. A similar compromise was effected later by Epicurus, by the Stoics, and even, regardless of logic, by sceptics, as Carneadês. *Worship* continued to be the main strength of Greek religion, and one of the essential signs of loyalty to the state; by its rites and ceremonies it embraced the entire individual life. Even Christians in their day could not stand apart from it without putting themselves outside the pale of law and citizenship.

Honour to the gods took the forms of prayer, of various offerings, precious and otherwise, according to each worshipper's trade or occupation—his pipes, his pencil, his net; works of art too, and animals; and Aphrodité actually had her *clientèle* of courtesans. There were sacrifices in addition to the offerings: unbloody sacrifices, such as fruit, cakes, libations, incense; and bloody sacrifices, of sheep, goats, swine, bulls, and so forth. White animals were reserved for the Olympian gods, and were sacrificed in the morning. Black animals were offered to the *Earth-gods*, to "heroes," and to the dead: these sacrifices were in the evening, and no portion of the victims was reserved for those who assisted.

Human sacrifices of an expiatory character were also in use among the Greeks in early times. Gradually the ancient customs became mitigated, or were eluded; but human sacrifices did not entirely disappear, mention being made of them among the Ionians of the sixth century. In the time of Pausanias (second century A.D.), human victims were sacrificed in Arcadia to the Lykian Zeus.

VI

End of the Greek Religion

The conquests of Alexander the Great brought about a wider spread of the Greek religion in Asia and Egypt, Greek gods being held in special favour by Alexander himself. Among the objects of worship were soon included deified kings and queens, beginning with Alexander and the Ptolemies. The new dynasty of Egypt thus inherited the divine homage already paid of old to the Pharaohs. The example was quickly followed by the Seleucidæ at Antioch. These apotheoses gained the readier acceptance as they fitted in with theories widely current in the learned world. Euhemerus had taught Alexandrian scholars the doctrine that all the gods, beginning with Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus, were only divinized mortals. This made the deification of the kings, "saviours and benefactors," an action quite in conformity with traditional precedent.[1]

Eventually Greece came under foreign influences. Egyptian deities, already honoured in Greek ports by certain private associations (*thiasoi*, *eranoi*), composed mainly of strangers, gained many new worshippers in the Greek world. Worshippers of Isis and Serapis quickly multiplied in the Ægean islands, in Greece, and in Sicily, and from Sicily the Egyptian cult spread to Italy. Less popularity attended other Eastern cults, "owing to the fact that the Greek *Mysteries*, especially those of Eleusis, taught analogous doctrines, and sufficiently satisfied the religious need" (Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, p. 261). Cybelé was worshipped as early as the fifth century, but the Greeks never overcame their repugnance for her disreputable paramour, the Phrygian Attis. The Syrian goddess Atar-gatis[2] had devout

[1] *Cf.* Lecture xv., *Ancient King-Worship.* [2] Lecture vii. p. 12.

worshippers only among the merchants of Delos. As regards Mithra, so powerful in the Latin provinces of Imperial times, his worship never gained a real footing on Greek soil.[1]

SYNCRETISM.—In the fusion of ideas and races which was the characteristic of "Hellenism," a change came over Greek mythology. There was a loss of definiteness in the features of the gods, a fusion of outlines, a capricious interchange of attributes from one god to another. Inscriptions testify to the frequent assimilation of Isis to Demêter, Aphrodité, Athené, Nemesis—of Osiris to Dionysos and Adonis —of Serapis to Asklepios, Zeus, Dionysos—of the Thracian goddess Bendis to Artemis, Hecaté, Persephoné. By slow degrees the idea was evolved that all these names responded to a single divine force, mysterious and undefined. These fluctuations of thought are reflected in language by the use of such vague, indefinite phrases as "the Divine," "the Divinity." The abstract cult of Fortune developed in a remarkable way, as though the revolutions following on the Macedonian conquest had stirred up in man a more lively sense of his dependence on Destiny—a fatalist tendency emphasized by the steady invasion of Chaldean astrology. Although stimulating to religious curiosity, this syncretism became one of the chief obstacles to the spread of Christianity. Nothing could be more opposed to ideas then current than the doctrinal exclusiveness of the Christian religion, its moral *intransigeance*, and its horror of any compromise with pagan cults. The Christian had to live in the world, nay, in the family circle, as one not belonging to it, and, in obedience to the hard saying of the Master, "to lose his life in order to save it." *Cf.* Lecture xvi. 21.

The Roman period brings us to the threshold of Christianity. With Augustus, *Cæsar-worship* was intro-

[1] Lecture xvi., pp. 8, 9.

duced into Greece and Asia Minor, and accepted with servile submissiveness.[1] From this point the history of Greek religion is one with that of paganism in the Roman Empire, and shares its struggles with Christianity, and its final overthrow. To this last phase belong the most serious attempts at a pagan reformation known to the ancient world—the syncretism of Plutarch and Maximus of Tyre, which saw behind the multitude of divine names, Greek and "barbarian," a single and identical divinity; the attempts of the Stoics to harmonize their philosophy and the popular religion by an allegorical exegesis of Homer and the traditional legends; the neo-Platonic synthesis of Porphyry, setting the whole array of pagan myths and oracles over against Christian revealed dogma and Holy Scripture. But no efforts on the part of philosophy, no persecution, whether armed with the sword, as under Diocletian, or with legal enactments, as under Julian the Apostate, could arrest the triumphal progress of Christianity. In 392 an edict of Theodosius closed the last of the pagan temples.

. . . . . .

Most of the necessary comments upon the Greek religion have been made in the course of this article. That it had neither unity, so far as it belonged to the different states which made up the Greek-speaking world, nor coherence within the cults which belonged even to one canton, is obvious; and that, by its ready acceptance of any foreign cult, however disreputable, which excited the imagination without offending the artistic sense, it had no chance of permanence, is no less clear. It belongs rather to a study of the Greek philosophies[2] to show that the Greeks had, and could have, no consistent explanation of the world, its origin and destiny; no worthy or

[1] Lecture xv. [2] Lecture xii.

justifiable account of the existence and nature of God capable of assimilation by the people; no authoritative code of morals. Grossly coarse nature-myths disfigured their earlier mythology: identically the same imaginative and dramatic spirit which raised the art and drama of Greece to so sudden and almost miraculous a perfection in the hands of her noblest poets and sculptors, reduced her religion, by the means of inferior exponents, to a convention whereby gods and goddesses survived only to serve as ideally beautiful subjects for a group of statuary or a painted vase, or as the traditionally sublime touch in a tragedy, or as the useful means of solving a tangled plot. In the public life alone the splendid civic festivals which centred in the city's chief deity had a certain moral value; they lifted patriotism to a higher plane, and men felt themselves more truly brothers under the high celestial patronage. But, in general, folk prayed for help to the thousand minor deities and heroes beloved of local piety; and superstition ran riot among the uneducated.

The keener the Greek's intellect, the more fatal his lack of moral stamina. "The Greeks are always children," said the grave old Egyptian priest. They were unable to tolerate for long the austere and really lofty doctrine of an Æschylus: Socratês was slain: Plato left Athens in disgust. For even when the Greek was not frivolous, cheerfully denying, or as cheerfully practising, the rituals to which he attributed no real meaning, he was strangely and disastrously able to see the good, the true, and the real, and yet not wish to grasp it. Theory and practice lay for him apart. He could catch glimpses of the divine vision, the "ensample in the sky," as Plato called it, and be content to leave it there. This violation of eternal sanctities, and the prostitution of his noblest gifts, brought the Greek down, and were far worse than mere crassness of moral vision and lack of

spiritual sensitiveness. In the florid, yet flaccid, outlines of later Greek art, in the pretentious unoriginality of the later literature, we trace the rapid development of the neurotic and the inert which alternate in degenerate organisms. As the Roman worship stiffened into formalism, and then crumbled to dust, so the Greek beauty-cult flowed away into an immoral sentimentality which itself evaporated. It is a sad but a most valuable lesson, that the human qualities which can carry a man and a nation so high, can carry him no higher ; and can, deserting him, leave him to fall into a corruption the more hideous for his glorious past.

Nothing worth mentioning of the Greek religion as such has survived. For the regeneration of the Platonist and Aristotelian philosophy within the Catholic Church (where everything that is good not only survives, but reaches full development and perfection) we must refer the reader to our Tracts on the history of Catholic Christianity and, in particular, of AQUINAS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fr. H. Browne, S.J., *Homeric Age*, passim.
Dr. L. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States.*
Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (stimulating but untrustworthy).

Much information will be found in the works of Dr. G. Murray and Mr. Walter Pater, and the *Journal of Hellenic Studies.*

THE RELIGION OF THE ATHENIAN PHILOSOPHERS

By Henry Browne, S.J.

In order to bring a rather large subject within reasonable limits, I shall confine myself to the three great names of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and I will only premise this. Religion, when anything more than a mere convention of civil and political life, must necessarily contain, though in varying degrees, two elements — the rational and the emotional. The absence of either must vitiate religion; the undue predominance of either must impair it. Now, in dealing with the religion of men who made their mark as philosophers, there may be some danger of insisting too much on its rational side. In fact, it seems almost inevitable that we should direct our thoughts primarily to their philosophic opinions, as a means of arriving at some knowledge of their religious standpoint. But in the inquiry we are about to make, we must steadfastly bear in mind that religion as such is not philosophy any more than philosophy is religion.

I

The Athens of Socrates and Plato

We cannot properly discuss the religion of Socrates and Plato (Aristotle will come later) without first trying to picture to ourselves the surroundings into which they were born. Greek Paganism was not a cut-and-dried sort of thing, any more than is modern Christianity (taking the term in its most comprehensive sense). Indeed, if it is allowable to compare a small though important imperial city with a large, world-

wide empire, I think we may trace a marked similarity between Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. and Great Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth A.D. In both we are struck with the sight of a great and growing democracy, full of activity and splendour; ardent, though not always rancorous, in its political strife: and in both there is discernible a religious spirit, strongly marked but critical, restless, unsatisfied Without trying to push this comparison, we may at once essay the task of describing the principal schools of religious thought in Athens.

OLYMPIANISM.—What we may regard as the faith of the established church in Greece was that centred in the Homeric[1] or Olympian divinities—always, of course, strongly coloured by local predilections. As at Olympia Zeus, the Father of the Gods, had his special seat, at Delphi and Delos Apollo, at Corinth and Paphos Aphrodite, and at Ephesus Artemis; so at the city which glorified her name the virgin Athena reigned as supreme patroness. Next to her in importance, perhaps, came Dionysus, the god of wine and of the drama, who was also in the mystic rites of the Attic Eleusis to some extent identified with the local Iacchus. This religion was purely anthropomorphic in character, its services were official and stately; to honour Zeus and his daughter Athena was counted for an Athenian citizen a mark, and almost a test, of patriotism. In saying this, we must not omit to add that, although Apollo was claimed by the Dorians as their special protector, to revere the responses given by the priests at Delphi, which was the central oracle of Greece and the navel of the earth, was equally patriotic, if not from the Athenian, at least from the general Hellenic point of view. *Cf.* Lecture xi. 14.

[1] By calling the established religion of Greece Homeric, I do not mean to subscribe to the somewhat doubtful view that it grew to any great extent out of the Homeric poetry; but merely that Homer was for the Athenians as for us the chief exponent of Olympianism.

THE ORPHIC CULTS.—In strong contrast to this orthodox and Olympian religion was the special creed symbolized by special rites and known through Greece by the name of Orphic, though its real origin was then, as it is now, very obscure. At times and places it tended somewhat to become merged into the more established forms of belief, but in spirit at least the two kinds of religion were for the most part utterly opposed. For instance, we referred above to Dionysus, who was, long before the age we are considering, firmly established at Delphi along with Apollo as his brother; he was, moreover, worshipped in the Eleusinian Mysteries, and was the recognized patron of the Greek theatre under the Acropolis, where the official contests in tragedy, and, to some extent, in comedy, were carried on. But the Dionysus or Bacchus of the Orphic priests, the god of the revelling Bacchant, was a very different and much less respectable person. As an instance of this, in the same comedy, Aristophanes the orthodox, the stalwart defender of the State religion, devoutly hymns the Athenian Dionysus, or Iacchus, and pours out all the venom of his ridicule and wrath upon the god of the revels and his champion Euripides, who has recently produced in his honour the *Bacchæ*, which may be considered his masterpiece. The whole conception underlying each of these two religions was utterly different from the other, just as the ideas of a High Church dean would be utterly different from those of a Salvation Army captain. It is far more a question of *éthos* than of doctrine. The Orphic prophet was a revivalist of the most pronounced type. He appealed neither to tradition nor to patriotism, nor again to argument, but to the facts of the individual's own consciousness. His god was real because he could and did produce ecstasy and spiritual regeneration. Not that this principle of immediate communion with the divinity was entirely absent

from the orthodox faith. At Delphi too the Sybil was intoxicated, and not with wine. But there is all the difference between a mysticism which is free and irresponsible and one that is controlled by propriety and managed by a respectable guild of priests. Throughout Hellas the struggle between the two religious types had been bitter and had been kept up for long; nor was it by any means ended towards the closing decades of the fifth century. The Pythagorean Brotherhood had perhaps alone attempted to combine elements of the more popular religion with what was exclusive and aristocratic. Their political influence was now broken up in its principal abode, and as they spread through the cities of Greece they must have given a strong impulse to the Orphism which already prevailed among the people; but they had begun now to be reputed less for their Orphic tenets than for the system of philosophy with which those tenets had been always associated. *Cf.* xi. 21–24.

Spread of Rationalism in Greece.—Philosophy was not indigenous in Athens, but it had already reached her soil and was working there noteworthy changes. From the first, even in Ionia, the land of its birth, it had taken the form of a revolt against priestcraft and all the forms of revealed religion. Like our modern scepticism, the new rationalism in Greece was based upon the study of physical phenomena rather than upon merely abstract lines of reasoning. The Athens of, roughly, a generation before Plato proved a very congenial soil for the growth of this new learning. Pericles, among his other varied interests in life, had striven to foster it, and with Aspasia, his foreign mistress, had gathered round him a coterie of savants like Anaxagoras, Xeno, and, later, Socrates himself. The time had not yet come for the Athenian intellect to take the lead in speculation, but Pericles and his friends were already animated with a genuine enthusiasm for extending the bounds of human knowledge. *Cf.* xi. 24.

THE TEACHERS OF PHILOSOPHY. — Meanwhile philosophy suffered a temporary eclipse owing to the reputation which it was rapidly gaining for Sophistry. The name Sophist was a loose one, capable of including many types as well as personalities; and while we shall accordingly refrain from accepting any of the wide generalizations current about the Sophists, we may yet admit that among them were to be found quite respectable individuals, who taught rhetoric and dialectic for a fee. But, all the same, at Athens they had a bad name as a class. They were, rightly or wrongly, unpopular, and because they were the best-known exponents of philosophy, the net result of their activity was to bring this study into disrepute. Their adversaries, chiefly men of the conservative party, accused them of calling everything into question, alike what was sacred and fundamental in religion and in social morality.

In our own debating societies we can endure to hear the rising generation discussing serious topics as though they had no higher importance than to serve for whetting youthful intellects and preparing future public speakers. It was not so at Athens. The average Athenian would have felt sympathy for the soldier-saint of Loyola who had an objection to his cadets arguing, even in the usual manner of scholastic disputation, about the existence of God. The wiser heads at Athens began to ask with some heat why their sons and grandsons, who were to be soldier-citizens, were being taught by these purveyors of new wisdom to question what had been always believed by Athenians. Yet there remained some who dearly loved to hear, perhaps to join in, these dangerous argumentations, especially when they discussed the problems of the higher life

II

Socrates

Such a state of society as the one outlined was favourable to a new movement. On the one hand, intense zeal for the things of the spirit, and intense activity in regard to all the interests of life; on the other, a kind of *impasse* between those cold, conventional beliefs and that colder and deadlier form of criticism which must eventually lead to paralysis and mental starvation. Socrates hated the politicians and the Sophists about equally, and, though he had a fund of human kindliness hidden away in his soul, he never attempted to conceal his dislikes.

His Eccentricities.—The situation required a mind built on strong lines. Only a man of extraordinary power could have remained absolutely aloof from all parties at Athens. Everybody knew everybody, and discussed the private affairs of everybody no less than their public doings. Socrates made it a point of duty to be on good terms with men of all sorts, and to become familiar with all the facts of human life. Though everybody knew all about him, nobody seemed to understand him; but this was not wonderful, seeing that he did not presume to understand himself. He did not presume to understand anything. Therefore could he never take payment for teaching (as did the Sophists), for his rôle was not to give knowledge to his fellow-citizens, but to make them realize their fundamental ignorance.

Yet he was no sceptic. If he differed from the orthodox, it was chiefly because, even though sincere, they subordinated the longings of the soul to the exigencies of statecraft; whereas he appears to have believed that most of the professional teachers of philosophy prostituted truth by pretending to knowledge for the sake of private gain. But, in point of fact, abstract speculation was to Socrates vapid and aimless. What he felt the need of was some standard of conduct which

should be to him and his fellow-men like a pillar of fire in the dark night of the present discontent at Athens.

THE SOCRATIC DOCTRINE.—One thing he never doubted, and that was that knowledge—true, practical knowledge—could alone furnish the solution of the problems which to him were pressing on his heart like a waking nightmare. Another should come later who should tell the world, "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness," and Socrates held that the evils with which he felt burdened were due to nothing more than to obscuration of the higher powers of the soul. Thus, although his stomach revolted against the banquet provided at Athens by the self-appointed Teachers of Wisdom, yet he was still prepared to insist that wisdom, or even knowledge, was the one thing needful for the virtuous citizen. Further than this he never attempted to carry metaphysical inquiry. To turn to the subject of our own quest, Socrates was of an intensely religious tone of mind—if by religion we mean faith in the unseen, together with the deepest conviction of its importance. We have no evidence that Socrates was interested in the religious, any more than in the philosophical, controversies of the hour. What we know is that he was faithful in practising the traditional duties of a Greek towards the gods, believing that this was better than spiritual atrophy and whole-hearted devotion to the things of sense. The unity of God he certainly, like all intelligent Greeks, took as a matter of course. How best to combine this with the polytheism of the current faith was a problem which he felt neither capacity nor inclination to grapple with. But thoughtfulness and reverence with regard to divine matters, a tendency to believe rather than to scoff, an intense determination never to swerve from such principles of the higher life as he could discern—if this means religion, Socrates was a religious man. All the greatest teachers of humanity have used example

more than precept in the inculcation of their ideas. And Socrates not merely lived according to his standard of religious faith; he also sealed his life by dying for the truth which had been his lode-star.

PICTURE OF THE DYING SOCRATES.—It is difficult for us accurately to estimate the doctrines of Socrates, because we learn them chiefly from one who had such a devotion to his memory that he used his name constantly as a vehicle for expressing something widely different, namely, his own speculations in philosophy. Plato loved metaphysic as much as his preceptor had eschewed it; and in the greatest of his dialogues he has given us at one and the same time a detailed and touching account of the last hours of Socrates, and his own highly subtle and technical arguments regarding the existence of the soul after death. Such a masterpiece of literature, such a human document is the *Phædo*, that we cannot complain of its method; but it is really difficult for the most careful and sympathetic reader to know exactly where Socrates ends and Plato begins. It is hardly possible to doubt that Socrates did really spend the closing day of his life in a discourse with his pupils on immortality, though we are perfectly clear that he could not have said anything like what he is dramatically credited with saying. But even if we believed the whole thing to be a concoction of the writer, yet the dialogue would have an important bearing on our knowledge of the real Socrates, and of his influence upon religious thought. For it would still remain true that Plato has chosen this method to impress upon us the immense debt which he felt he owed to the first trainer of his spirit. In his later life he fell under other influences of an intellectual kind, powerful enough in their way, but not to be compared in their effects to the impressions made upon his growing mind by his communings with the martyr, that strange, wayward son of Phænarete the midwife.

III

Plato

Plato's own mind was indeed a particularly receptive one, though it was far too great not to be thoroughly original at the same time. It is perhaps to this happy combination of qualities that his power in dealing with abstract problems ought to be traced. In any case, he not only thought much but he conversed much like his master, though with other aims than his. In his own city Plato met with many strangers, men of systems and ideas, and he gathered that foreign travel would be a suitable preparation for the student of metaphysics.

This was, no doubt, the safest of antidotes, for Plato would have been a mere dreamer had he not acquired the habit of testing his philosophical conclusions by the appeal to known facts of human life. But there was a special reason for his first departure from Athens. After the tragedy of the judicial murder of his dear master he had no heart to stay in Athens, even had it been safe for him to do so. The Dorian Megara was the nearest city outside the Attic border, and it so happened that at Megara a school of philosophy existed which proved very congenial to his mind. It marked a reaction from the physicist school, and was therefore welcome to the man of ideas. Later, Plato went to South Italy, among other distant regions,[1] and there he fell under Pythagorean, and incidentally under Orphic, influences. His philosophy, if we regard its material elements, was essentially eclectic; but when these had passed through the alembic of his fertile and constructive brain there was no trace of suture in the final compound. With that philosophy we have no direct concern; there are, however, certain salient aspects in it which are vital to a consideration of Plato's religion.

[1] He spent considerable time in Sicily, making probably three visits there; most probably he visited Cyrene and Egypt; the visits to Chaldea and even more distant localities are purely mythical.

THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSMIGRATION. — Plato thought it was demonstrable by experiment that all knowledge which is not due to immediate sense-perception can, and can only, be accounted for as the awakening of ideas which were unperceived because dormant in the mind. This fact could be explained by the doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. It is difficult for Westerns to realize the extent to which the world's thought has been tinged by this doctrine. Most Oriental systems, and even those, like the Egyptian, which lie, as it were, on the borderland of East and West, have been based largely upon the belief that souls migrate from one body to another. In Plato's mind the doctrine was almost inseparably connected with any belief in the future state, a point which was for him, as for many, the cardinal question for philosophy. If all our knowledge of higher truth is really recollection (Anamnêsis) of something learned in a *previous existence*—a *previous incarnation*, as the modern theosophist calls it—it is but a step to the proof of a *future* existence, which may well turn out to be eternal. *Cf.* Lect. iv. 5, 11; v. 7, etc.

We need not, however, have recourse to Buddhist philosophy to illustrate Plato, seeing that the notion of Anamnêsis is so familiar to readers of Wordsworth:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting
> And cometh from afar;
> Not in entire forgetfulness
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home.

It will hardly be thought out of place to quote poetry[1] in connection with the thoughts of Plato. In

[1] As we know from an express statement in one of his letters that Wordsworth merely accepted the doctrine of Anamnêsis symbolically and as a vehicle for poetic thought, it would be superfluous here to discuss the question of his literal agreement with Plato, who laid stress on the doctrine from the philosophic standpoint.

him the world has recognized a prose-poet in the very highest sense of the term, nor can we utterly disentangle his philosophy from the imaginative setting in which lies much of its convincing power. For instance, who would dream now of putting forward his arguments for immortality as satisfactorily appealing to the reasoning faculty? It is clear that in great measure they are not merely inconclusive—they might, if taken *au pied de la lettre*, be not unfairly styled chimerical; and it is but fair to add that Plato himself evidently feels that he is on much safer ground when he appeals to the heart, that is, when he is insisting on the great fact of immortality, than when he is groping to find a metaphysical chain of proof of which every link will bear the strain he wants to put upon it. As a philosopher he is usually tentative; he had learnt from Socrates the "divine gift of discontent": it is when his inspiration seizes him that he can hurry us along unresisting.

THE PLATONIC IDEAS.—If we carry our inquiry into Plato's metaphysic a little further, we shall hope to find that it will throw no small light upon the subject we are pursuing, namely, his attitude towards religion. We have already seen that, along with the belief in transmigration, he laid the greatest stress upon Anamnêsis as the source of knowledge—or, in other words, upon the doctrine of Platonic Ideas. This theory may be called the very keystone of Plato's metaphysical arch. There can be little doubt that it was a gradual growth in the mind of Plato, and that at different periods of his writing he saw and understood, as it were, different phases of the doctrine, which he never really mastered thoroughly, though he left his speculations as a precious heirloom. Aristotle modified the doctrine, but did not really reject it, and may have been far more beholden to it than he quite realizes when he is directing his criticism against some of Plato's more flagrant exaggerations.

Plato recognized that we have certain concepts of supra-sensual truth; and in order to emphasize their reality, he thought it was necessary to objectivize those concepts under the title of ideas which are self-sufficing, immutable, eternal. Compared with the truth of those existent ideas whose being is not conditioned by time and space, all other existences, like those which make up the visible world, are true merely in a secondary sense. Their truth is not something absolute; it is borrowed from the eternal verities, the ideas. Visible things are true because and in so far as they express or embody the unconditioned truth. They cannot imitate the ideas adequately. Every imitation has an element of falseness in it, and here the imitations of the ideas belong to an order which is so far beneath the ideal truth as to be little better than a parody. The difference between a substance and its shadow is no greater than that between ideal and real verity.

THE IDEA OF GOOD.—But if the ideal or spiritual order is altogether higher than the material, in the higher too there are gradations, as in a hierarchy of Being. Some ideas are higher than others, because they are more necessary, more comprehensive, more abstract, that is, further removed from the hampering conditions of material existence. At the very apex of all being is the idea of Good. This is in the spiritual world what the sun is in the physical, the source of light, heat, and generative power. Nothing in Plato is more beautiful than the celebrated myth in the *Republic*, in which men who have not learned philosophy are likened to the inmates of a dark cave, who have never seen the light of day and the realities of the world above them. Their eyes are only accustomed to see shadows thrown from a fire within the cave, and if they should ever ascend to the sunlight to look for the first time upon real things, their eyes would be dazzled and injured by the unaccustomed glare of the

sun's rays, and they would be unable to see clearly any object, however visible in itself.

Those who are familiar with Plato's dialogues are aware of the immense importance which he attaches to the idea of the Good. He is ever recurring to it from different points of view, and seems ever to derive from the thought of it fresh enthusiasm and philosophic power.

It would hardly appear an exaggeration to assert that the whole theory of ideas is an effort to place religion upon an intellectual basis, inasmuch as it is an insistence upon the reality of spiritual, as opposed to visible, things. But the question at once arises, whether Plato intended to identify the idea of Good with God as a reality, and if so, how far Plato's religious position must have been modified by such a method of conceiving the Deity? This subject presents many difficulties on the philosophical side. Although I should like to answer the first part of my question in the affirmative (and in doing so I can appeal to the great and unquestioned authority of Zeller [1]), yet it must be clearly stated that Plato did not consistently maintain the identity of God as Creator with the ideal Good, for, especially towards the end of his life, he found that, however attractive the view might be from the religious side, the dialectical difficulties were almost insuperable. But in this very fact do we not find evidence of a religious spirit? As a philosopher, the ideas came first, and yet he was prepared to strain them to the uttermost in order to reconcile them with theistic doctrine.

It might be interesting at this point to quote a passage in which Plato gives his views as to the existence and nature of the Supreme Being as being thoroughly inconsistent with popular mythology, which described the gods as appearing to men under the most various and grotesque forms.

[1] Zeller, *Plato and the Older Academy*, p. 285, and again, p. 499.

In the second book of the *Republic*, he asks,[1] "Do you think that God is a cheat, who would be likely to appear insidiously under different forms at different times, now really becoming such and changing his own form for many others, now pretending this to deceive us and make us think that he does it; or do you believe that he absolutely refuses to the very last to divest himself of his proper form?" and, again, after proving that all change is sign of imperfection, he resumes, "Surely God is of all things the most perfect?" "Certainly. And if he change at all, it must be for the worse, for we certainly shall never admit that God is wanting in beauty or excellence."

"Most true, Adeimantus; and do you think that anyone, either God or man, would willingly make himself worse in any respect?" "Impossible."

"It is impossible, then, for God to wish to change himself; but as it seems he, being most good and beautiful, will as far as possible always remain simply in his own proper form."

It will hardly admit of dispute that this view of the Divinity is sublime, especially as coming from a Pagan writer. But the question still remains, is it religious? Must we necessarily grant that there is anything approaching ever so distantly the Christian idea of the Godhead? In order to produce the loving service which religion expects its votaries to offer to God, something more is required than belief in a philosophic idea, however exalted that idea may be in itself. Religion seeks to institute a sort of personal relation between the adorer and the object of adoration.

This question of the character of Plato's God is of course a controversial one, yet it is too fundamental for our purpose to allow of its being passed over in silence. We cannot, I think, do better than appeal again to Zeller. He distinguishes[2] between what is

[1] In a dialogue with Adeimantus, 380 C ff.

[2] See *Plato and the Older Academy*, ch. vi. p. 289.

clear and what is vague in Plato; between his refraining from a discussion of the Personality of God, and from a repudiation of that Personality. He adds, "All that Plato says concerning the perfection of God, divine Providence, and the care of the gods for men, gives the impression that he shares the religious belief, and holds it in the main to be well founded."

THE DOCTRINE OF ERÔS.—If we now turn to another phase of the Platonic doctrine, namely, that relating to Love (Erôs), we shall find in it something which, when combined with the idea of Good, brings that sublime conception nearer to our own level and more within the range of our religious sense. Every line of Plato's work shows that he had a thoroughly Greek nature: I mean one that thrilled with every touch, was alive with sensitiveness to every form of beauty, whether of heaven or of earth, the symmetry of numbers, the harmony of voice and lyre, the splendour of the sun and stars, the golden charm of passionate youth, the mute appeal of lovers' eyes. Erôs, the love-god—well might the Platonic Socrates discourse about his empire, for he knew it well! In his earlier days, at least, Plato's veins had swelled with a stream of hot blood, and he did not mean that his philosophy should be a bloodless thing. The historical Socrates had addressed his fellow-citizens, the younger generation: the Socrates of Plato was a more abstract personage, but his appeal too should touch a chord of the human soul; it should not be utterly futile because utterly abstract. He would show men that the idea of the Good is not altogether beyond their ken, for even when their hearts are set on concrete beauty, it is really the ideal Beauty which is calling to them under the veil of a sensible good. The Erôs doctrine at once reaches to heaven and touches the earth. It supposes that the real and proper object of human desire is Infinite Beauty, and that our attraction to sensible beauty is entirely due

to the fact that (according to the doctrine of ideas) the physical object is always in some degree an imperfect imitation of that which is in itself absolutely perfect. Why then does not the soul regularly mount as it should, on this theory, from the knowledge and love of the concrete reality to the knowledge and love of the ideal Good? Alas! we know too well, and Plato knew too well, the weakness and the deordination which so frequently characterizes the love of human hearts. Plato would explain the facts of human life, not on the ground of any defect in our faculties, still less in their objects, but simply because we are always tending to misuse our opportunities, and to rest in the pleasure that accompanies perception rather than to use it as a wing for soaring higher.

Perhaps the most brilliant passage in all Plato is the metaphorical description of the struggle in which the mastery gained by the soul over the passions is likened to a charioteer controlling a restive horse and "falling back, as do racers at the barrier of the starting-place, and with a violent wrench doth he drag the bit out of the teeth of the wild steed and covereth his abusive tongue and jaws with blood, and forceth his legs and haunches to the ground and giveth him over to torment."[1]

The above passage relating to the Erôs doctrine regards what we may call its negative side, inasmuch as it deals with deflections from the true ascent of the human soul towards the idea of Good. But if we turn to the *Symposium* we shall find the actual process described by which the soul gradually ascends from contemplating the lower object to the higher, from the particular to the universal good. It is Socrates who speaks, but he is quoting the words of an inspired prophetess, Diotîma, from whom he pretends that his knowledge of the Erôs doctrine has been derived. She declares[2] that at the beginning,

[1] In the *Phædrus*, 253D–257.

[2] *Symposium*, ch. xxviii. 210 A.

if a youthful lover, he will be enamoured of a single beautiful form, and then by degrees he will see that beauty is always one and the same, and he will abate his violent passion and will become enamoured of beauty, first of the body, and later of the soul. Then he will admire virtue more than comeliness, and will understand that personal beauty is a small matter; but as he contemplates the vast sea of beauty, in his love of wisdom he will create many fair thoughts, and at last the vision of a single science, the science of beauty, will be revealed to him.

"And then," he proceeds, "he who hath been carried to this point in the education of Erôs, suddenly shall he behold, O Socrates, that wondrous fair nature for the sake of which all his toil hath been thus far undergone, which is in the first place eternal, having neither birth nor death, increase nor decrease; nor is sometimes fair and sometimes not, to one fair and to another not, nor in one part fair and in another not; nor shall any fair thing be like unto it, neither face nor hands nor other parts, nor hath body any part in it, nor speech, nor science; but beauty absolute, unchanging in its form, while it also gives some participation of itself to everything else which is beautiful. Thus the true method of Erôs is to rise from the knowledge of beautiful forms, as by steps in a ladder, to the knowledge of beautiful deeds, and then to beautiful ideas, till finally we arrive at the idea of Absolute Beauty, and learn at last in what the true essence of beauty consists."

Who does not at once feel that this doctrine is religious in the highest sense of the word? Like the poetry of Wordsworth and of Browning, who both were under Platonic influence, the Erôs doctrine starts from the known facts of human nature and endeavours to base upon them belief in infinite wisdom and love for infinite goodness. The keynote in Browning's philosophy is the existence of love in the

world. He is constantly saying that love is the great fact in human life, that nothing but it is of any account. This is essentially a human view of religion, but is none the less true and deep. That God is Love is the great lesson of Christianity; and it is a doctrine which Plato would hardly have objected to, though he was incapable of formulating it. Perhaps the doctrine of Erôs is the nearest approach which the pagan mind ever made towards Christianity.

PLATO'S PERSONALITY.—Let us leave the philosopher and come to the man. In Plato's case these two do not dwell so far apart that the transition should appear violent. And this is the proper place to add that, although we insist on the vast distinction that exists between religion and philosophy, in Plato's own mind there is no such distinction. Even when he is discussing the higher problems of human thought, he never seems to realize how far he has travelled, theoretically at least, from the Socratic standpoint. Socrates in this was consistent enough, that he not only cared for moral and religious truths, but he cared for little else; whereas Plato is as persistent as he is subtle in the investigation of all the profoundest logical and metaphysical problems. Yet he ever assumes that philosophy is also to all intents and purposes what we call religion. I mean that he simply identifies the life of the philosopher with the highest life which man can live. In the *Phædo* he makes a distinction between the virtue of the man in the street and that of the philosophic man, declaring that the former is not real virtue because it is based on inadequate motives. Again, in explaining his Erôs theory, he identifies the impulse given by concrete beautiful objects towards the higher idea of Beauty with the philosophic impulse which he calls enthusiasm or religious inspiration. Only those who fail to keep this view of Plato in mind will wonder at the so-called paradox in the *Republic*, which asserts

that things can never go well in the world "until Philosophers become Kings, or Kings Philosophers." Yet to him philosophy meant before all things an accurate dialectical method.

The very fact of this identification of dialectic study with the higher life in general will strike a modern mind as a confusion of ideas which might lead to dangerous consequences. This question interests us just now only in so far as it throws light upon the complex personality of Plato. To my mind the fact that he compares even the dry forms of his philosophy with religious aspiration merely shows that he was very much in earnest about both one and the other. Even though the mistake, as we might call it, should deprive him of some credit as a logician, yet as a man we might surely feel that he is entitled to our forgiveness for it.

We must also remember that, as a practical guide to life, philosophy in the best and highest sense was all that Plato had to look to. As distinct from this, religion must always imply some form of real or supposed divine revelation. Now, for an intellectual Pagan in the fifth century B.C. there was no revelation which could really be considered to make any serious claim to guide humanity in the various relations of life. In a remarkable passage in the *Phædo* this very point is discussed, and Plato seems to deplore the absence of a safer guidance than even philosophy could supply: some Divine Word which should supersede the necessity for mere human inquiry.

It is Simmias who speaks:[1]

"It seems to me, Socrates, and possibly it seems to you, that in such questions (*i.e. those relating to death and a future state*) certain knowledge is impossible or difficult of attainment in the present life. But not

[1] *Phædo*, chap. xxv. p. 85 D E. It is quite evident that Plato makes these sentiments of Simmias his own, nor is this point ever called in question by the different interpreters.

to examine what is said upon the subject by every means (without desisting from doing so, until one utterly fails in the inquiry) is, I take it, the part of a cowardly man. For in these matters our duty is to take one of these two courses: either to learn or discover the truth about them; or else, if that be impossible, then to take the best and soundest of human statements, and being carried upon this as upon a raft, to sail through the hazardous voyage of our life—unless indeed one could find it possible with a stronger sort of raft, I mean some Divine Word, to undertake the journey with greater safety and fewer hazards."

Simple as are these beautiful words, they have given rise to vast commentaries, in some cases on the part of those who apparently try to weaken their force. Quite a number of scholars think that Plato by the Divine Word (Theios Logos) intended a reference to the mysteries of Orphism, in favour of which, at least during a period of his life, he was no doubt strongly inclined. Such an interpretation appears to be somewhat forced, but I do not know that it would greatly weaken the significance of the passage. Suppose he was thinking of Orphism, yet the passage will still imply—first, that he knew of no heavenly doctrine which could satisfy his mind as an adequate solution of the mysteries of life and death—and, secondly, that if he should ever meet such a solution he would eagerly embrace it as being far more trustworthy than all the conjectures of approved philosophy.

Plato's attitude, then, towards religion, whether natural or revealed, is a tentative one, but wholly reverent and sympathetic. He feels deeply his ignorance, he longs for a complete answer to the "obstinate questionings" with which the mind of the wise man will be necessarily possessed. The highest wisdom consists in making the best use we can of our opportunities for gaining light. In Plato, the reasoning and the instinctive faculties are indeed finely balanced:

The elements
So mixed in him that nature could stand up
And say to all the world, *This was a man!*

His Attitude towards Paganism.—We have still to consider the attitude of Plato (and incidentally of Socrates, in so far as Plato represents his master) towards the religion of the State, and especially the view he took of the cults of the Olympian gods and goddesses. Here we find ourselves face to face with the most patent and almost crass contradictions. We can be certain of this. Neither Socrates nor Plato nor any of their contemporaries, except perhaps children and the most ignorant persons, believed in the literal truth of the orthodox mythology. Socrates, it is true, friend of Anaxagoras the Ionian physicist (who was much disliked by the Athenian ultra-patriotic party), had been accused of bringing new gods[1] into the State, and had warmly denied and resented the accusation as evidently trumped up by enemies. And both he and Plato speak with reverence of the national divinities. Towards the cult of Apollo in particular Plato seems to have felt quite a devotion. The last recorded words of Socrates, "Remember, I owe a cock to Æsculapius," do not point to entire unfaith in the popular beliefs. On the other hand, when Plato comes to speak out his mind on the stories which were recorded about the pagan divinities by the poets, and Homer in particular, he leaves us in no doubt as to his convictions about their falsity. Homer was regarded by all the Greeks as their inspired source of knowledge of history, religion, and politics. Even when it is a question of philosophy, Plato can quote Homer as an infallible court of final appeal. One

[1] Possibly by the new gods was specially meant the Nous or Intellect which Anaxagoras had postulated as the leading principle in the universe. There is no evidence that Anaxagoras himself in any way identified his Nous with a Divine Being in the strict sense. But the late J. Adam holds that he was the real founder of European monotheism. See *Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 264.

line in Homer will establish a momentous theory of the distinction of faculties in the soul. But as an educator of youth he will have none of him. The *Iliad* is to be thrown out of the school, and that on account of its false and deleterious religious doctrine. Homer is offensive to the religious sense, and Homer must go.[1]

Plato, therefore, was quite assured as to the untruth of the whole corpus of popular theology taken in its literal sense. We might, perhaps, have anticipated that he would have joined his lot with those thinkers who undertook to explain, or explain away, the symbolism of paganism so as to bring it into harmony with right reason, and with the monotheism which undoubtedly both Socrates and Plato professed.

But it was not so. This method of dealing with the popular faith was identified with the names of the extreme rationalizing party, whom Plato at least thoroughly disliked, all the more because Socrates had been unjustly condemned on the ground of belonging to it. And so far was he from sympathizing with these theories, which had been first invented by the Ionian physicists, that it was the aim of his life to drive them out of the country for ever. For he laboured to build up a system of metaphysic which should contradict the fundamental presuppositions of the physicists, many of whom had even attempted to gain adherents among the more conservative party by making Greek mythology fit in with their own theories.

As an instance of the contempt with which Plato treated these versatile sceptics, we may quote an ironical passage from the *Phædrus*[2]:—

"I consider, Phædrus, that all such theories (*i.e.* the allegorizing ones) are very pleasant, but they are the work of someone too clever and too laborious for me,

[1] It is true that Plato also rejects dramatic poetry on other than purely religious grounds.

[2] Ch. vi. p. 229 E.

and one I should not envy; for this reason alone, that after settling these points he would have to be accountable for the forms of the Centaurs and the Chimeras, and will be inundated with a crowd of Gorgons and Pegasuses and endless strange four-footed beasts.

"If on the other hand he disbelieve these things and seek to reduce them within the limits of probability, he will have to apply himself to a rustic kind of wisdom which will employ far too much of his time."

What, then, was Plato's position with regard to the current theology? Evidently he thought that elements of truth were contained in it, mixed up with many errors and corruptions. Manifest error was not to be tolerated, but he did not think it lay within the province of his philosophy, or that of any other frail human mind, to disentangle the wheat from the tares. He would hold fast to what was good, and for the sake of the pearl he would deal gently with the casket which enshrined it. He would always speak with reverence of the Greek divinities, and on occasion he would worship them—for the sake of the Unknown God.

IV

Aristotle

It is a big step to part company with Plato and to address ourselves to his greatest pupil, the founder of Peripateticism. Coleridge thought every man was either born a Platonist or an Aristotelian. May we add a third class?—those who are born to be both in turn. When reading Plato, who is not a Platonist? Was not Aristotle himself a Platonist? Aye, and a better one than he knew. We are going to put Aristotle to a severe test. After the warmth and the verdure of the valley, with its brightness "that never was on sea or land," we are going to scale the arid, ice-bound mountain-tops. But here too the scene is splendid and the ascent exhilarating.

INFLUENCE OF PLATO UPON ARISTOTLE.—There is less direct connection between Aristotle's philosophy as a whole and his religious spirit than we have found to exist in Plato's case, and accordingly our inquiry touching the younger man will be somewhat simpler. It will behove us to remember what, indeed, has been hinted more than once, that even the philosophic debt owed by Aristotle to his master was immense; it can hardly be over-estimated, and this in spite of the fact that Aristotle was eminently original in his cast of mind, and in all his various lines of speculation. But it is the same everywhere: in his psychology and ethics, in his views about politics and education,[1] even when criticising Plato freely, and sometimes only too warmly, we can trace constantly the mould in which the Aristotelian ideas had been formed. And it is worth remarking, that there is this difference between Aristotle's debt to Plato and the latter's debt to Socrates—that Plato during his life fell under other strong philosophic influences, the Megarean, the Eleatic, and the Pythagorean; whereas we cannot, so far as I know, trace analogous counteracting strains in the Peripatetic system. All that Aristotle had not of his own he derived from a single teacher.

Yet his temperament was a very different one from Plato's. Aristotle was no Athenian by birth; he came from the colder north, from Stagira, on the confines of Thrace. And in no department of thought is the contrast between the two philosophers more observable than in their treatment of religious questions. In Plato's mind they are uppermost, he needs small excuse for treating of them, and he does so with strong imagination and deep feeling. Aristotle rarely allows feeling to appear, except, indeed, when he is dealing with the subject of democracy, which he hated with more than Platonic fervour. And on no subject is he

[1] We might perhaps make exceptions in the case of the *Organon* and the treatise on Poetry. I am not aware that they show Platonic influence.

so reticent as on matters connected with religion. It is the one question which, as a systematic study, he may be said to have studiously avoided. When he does refer to it, it is with the restraint we might expect in a superb statue of dazzling brightness, could such be endowed with a superhuman capacity for thought. Whatever may be said on the other side, the greatest intelligences of the world were not irreligious—Bacon, Newton, Descartes, Kant. Aristotle was no exception to the rule, and therefore it is unnecessary to refer his religious convictions to any external influence. Nevertheless, it appears more than reasonable to suppose that any innate tendency which he had towards belief must have been developed by his early intercourse with the idealist.

ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE ABOUT GOD.—To have a clear view of the existence of God and to call him by his name is an important step towards religion. It is the first step, when we are dealing with theism; and there is no question of any other religion for the Athenian philosophers. Yet, for a religion worth talking about, the mere idea, the mere name of a supreme and transcendent being will not suffice. When discussing the ideal Good, we found it very necessary to inquire what Plato meant by it, and we have now to ask a similar question regarding Aristotle's First Cause, the Great Unmoved Being which moved all other beings. The question is in one sense easier now, because Aristotle's views are more developed, much more stable, and in a sense clearer than those of his forerunner. Yet the theological position of Aristotle is not without its difficulties.

We must guard against anachronism here. It would be very misleading to ask the simple question, "Did Aristotle believe in a personal God?" because the notion of personality as such never came within his ken. But we may ask, and very pertinently, Did Aristotle regard his First Cause as something towards

which any human being could possibly feel any emotion—not merely of personal love, but of fear or aversion? In particular, did he attribute to God as he conceived of him, anything answering to our notion of Providence? Had this First Cause the power, and if the power, had it the will, to do anything for us in our particular needs? Or was this God so splendidly isolated, so cut off from all contact with mundane affairs, that we should not imagine it as possible for him to trouble himself about us? We are trying to find out what sort of attitude, whether philosophic or personal, Aristotle held toward religion; and the question just indicated is one which must absolutely be faced at all hazards. His philosophic attitude is not, perhaps, easy to grasp, yet we shall render our task easier if we first assure ourselves that, however clear in themselves we may expect to find his statements, they need not necessarily be satisfying even from the intellectual standpoint.

It would of course be far beyond our scope to attempt even to outline the various speculative methods by which Aristotle fully persuaded himself philosophically of the existence of a First Cause that was Infinite Intelligence, at one with itself, ruling all things, unchanging and unchangeable, entirely self-sufficing, pure Existence,[1] and supremely blessed as the highest type of all happiness.[2]

But he goes further. The perfection of man consists in imitating the Divinity in its contemplation of itself. In Book X. of the *Nicomachean Ethics*[3] we read: "Compared to ordinary human existence, life according to the intellect is Divine (Theios), and it behoves us as far as possible to 'play the immortal,' and to strive after the highest life." And again, "The activity (Energeia)

[1] More strictly, Actuality (Energeia) without any trace of potentiality.
[2] See especially *Metaphysics*, book xi. 1072 A and B, 1074 B; book i. 983 A; and *Politics*, book vii. (iv.) 1323 B.
[3] Chaps. vii. 8, and viii. 7.

of God, which is of surpassing blessedness, consists in contemplation" (he argues that God cannot work, neither does he go to sleep) "and of human activities that which is most akin to this is also most blessed."

Thus knowledge and contemplation of God is the highest perfection of man. We are to admire God and we are to revere him,[1] and even to love him. This last point is of great importance for our inquiry. Note, however, that Aristotle nowhere goes so far as to state directly that God is capable of loving mankind. He thought that to attribute anything like emotion to the Divine Being would be derogatory —not merely bad emotions such as envy, which he expressly excludes,[2] but even the emotion of love. And it must also be admitted that, according to his view, the self-contained blessedness and immobility of God appeared to him to be in some sense inconsistent with what we call the doctrine of Divine Providence. In plain language, he exhorted us to love God without any hope of being loved in return.

It will probably be concluded by the reader that any religion professed by Aristotle will necessarily have been of a somewhat shadowy, bloodless, and inert type. This may be true; but I will quote the learned Dr Caird, who says,[3] in reference to Aristotle, that in him as "in every great thinker there are to be found glimpses of truth beyond the range of his explicit system." But even within this wonderful system there is a point to be emphasized, namely, that our love of God is not, as it were, accidentally obtruded into it. When the philosopher asks, "How can God, if absolutely immobile himself, move all

[1] There is an interesting quotation from Aristotle given by Seneca, in his *Questiones Naturales*, but taken from some of the many lost works of Aristotle, since the quotation cannot be verified. "Aristotle finely remarks that we should never be more reverent than when we are speaking about the Gods." *Qu. N.*, vii. 24.

[2] *Metaphysics*, book i. 983.

[3] *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, vol. ii. p. 3.

things?" he at once makes the celebrated reply (which of course brings us back to Plato), *Hôs Erômenon*,[1] "As That which is Loved." This tendency to love God is therefore of the essence of our being. It flows immediately from the fact that we are on the one hand intellectual, on the other hand not self-sufficing. The more this thought is dwelt upon by students of Aristotle, the more illumination it will be found to contain.

But the question for my readers to consider is, Could religion be founded on this Hôs Erômenon?

His Religious Sense.—That question is one I could not decide, but we need not leave the whole matter here. Whatever decision we may come to about the Aristotelian metaphysic, there is evidence, I think, that the intellectual leanings of the man were in no way opposed to the religious idea. For instance, he speaks, even regarding the (for him) difficult question of divine providence, as though somehow he more than half suspects that after all there is such a thing in reality.

As a reason for practising contemplation[2] he remarks that, "*if the gods care for human things as the opinion is*, then it is probable that they will care for that which is most like themselves, namely, intellect, and that they will do good in turn to those who love and honour this, because such men care for what is dear to themselves and do that which is right and noble. Therefore those who are wise will be most beloved by the gods."

This language is guarded, it is true; it directly commits the user of it to no contradiction of what he has elsewhere appeared to assert as being philosophically certain: still one cannot but ask, "Is this the language of a man who views religious questions unsympathetically?"

Again, if we look to the *Politics* we shall find

[1] ὡς ἐρώμενον. [2] *Ethics*, x. viii. 13.

evidence of the same spirit. In several places the author speaks of the necessity of providing for divine worship, and for a priesthood as a separate and quite necessary element in the State. Too much stress need not be laid upon this in itself; but the way in which the subject is dealt with would lead us to think that the writer really did attach some importance to the priestly office in general. He says [1] that of course no husbandman or mechanic ought to be allowed to pay homage to the gods; and that among the highest class of citizens those who have spent their lives in cultured leisure as members of the deliberative body may have the priestly office assigned to them when they have reached a venerable age.

From this we should expect to find that Aristotle, like his forerunner, was prone to deal gently with the current paganism. As to the myths in themselves, he has no patience to argue about them; he brushes them aside as beneath contempt. Yet he would reinstate Homer and the drama; he sometimes condescends to interpret them symbolically, if by so doing he can throw a passing ray of light upon one of his philosophical theories. But in one important point he makes an advance upon the idealism of Plato: he appeals, namely, to the universal sense of mankind in favour of the existence of divinity in some form. "Even the popular faith," he says, "has its roots in the search for truth." [2]

We may conclude, then, that Aristotle was cautious and tentative in his treatment of religious topics. On the whole, he seems to have "the wish to believe," but he is too calm a philosopher to allow himself when stating his views to be guided by emotion. But he had a marvellous insight into the essential strength of intellectual theism, and his testimony is the more valuable because of his temperamental restraint.

[1] In Book IV. (VII.), ch. ix. 1320 A.

[2] Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics*, chap. xvi., vol. ii. p. 33.

V

The Debt of Christianity to Athens

We can hardly close this brief inquiry into the religion of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle without some reference to the permanent mark their work has left upon ourselves. Our debt to them is indeed very great. Plato has always appealed chiefly to the imagination and the heart, Aristotle purely to the intellect. Therefore, it is not easy to decide offhand which of these two influences has been the stronger. It is like asking whether Bacon or Shakespeare has had more to do with moulding the England of to-day. We know without any doubt that the words of the poet have been read by a larger number than the words of the philosopher; but then, has Bacon's influence been more intense and more really pervasive? Certainly more people read Plato than Aristotle, and it is the man himself, not his philosophy, which appeals to them. But Aristotle too has done good work for humanity.

Again, these influences are not merely different in character; they began to be exercised at different periods and under different conditions. Prior to the end of the mediæval period, there were two great intellectual movements in the Christian Church, two attempts to find an intellectual basis for Christian doctrine. One of these was inaugurated by Augustine in the fifth century; the other by the scholastics culminating in Aquinas in the thirteenth. Both names belong to men of gigantic mould, names which rank high among the great ones, not merely of the Christian Church, but of human history. And they were very different types. In Augustine, as in Plato, we have a combination of the noblest gifts, reasoning power, enormous grasp of thought, a strong tinge of emotion, eloquence which moves rather than merely dazzles. Aquinas, like Aristotle, represents cold, clear thought,

exquisite balance of judgement, restraint, neglect of the graces of style, an unerring instinct for truth combined with intense devotion to its pursuit.

To the student, to trace the Platonic influence in Divus Augustinus, and the Peripatetic in Divus Thomas, is so plain that it requires few words. Yet it is a marvel indeed. What is Augustine's masterpiece, the *City of God*, but Plato's *Republic* with some adaptations? But this is little. What imports far more is the devotion of the great Doctor to the Infinite Beauty of God. "Too late have I loved Thee, Ancient Beauty!" What is this but the true Eros-doctrine after which Plato strove without being quite able to attain to it? Notice, we have nothing to say to these fanciful theories, once very prevalent among apologetic writers, that Plato was inspired by God with a sort of anticipatory knowledge of the Christian faith. What I maintain is this (and in the Scholastic movement the thing became too palpable to require insistence): the Greeks had used their faculties to such good purpose that the Christians who came after them found they could not substantially improve on their philosophic work. Naturally, there were some adjustments to be effected, some excrescences [1] to be lopped off, some deficiencies to be made good, but the main arguments remain almost untouched. After all, truth is a simple thing. Revelation does not contradict reason though it supplements it. Christian orthodox teaching, it is true, has always claimed to convey some truths which are absolutely and essentially above reason, truths which it is a fundamental error to try to establish or even explain by intellectual processes apart from the gift of infused faith. It is hardly necessary to state that in regard to such truths neither the methods nor the conclusions of Plato and Aristotle will avail.

[1] The most important of these, perhaps, was the doctrine of the eternity of matter. This has been universally rejected by Christians; but, even here, Aquinas had such respect for Aristotle that he refused to treat the doctrine as summarily as it deserved.

But controversy to-day rages little about such mysteries of faith as the triple personality of God, the change of substance in the elements, or the infusion of sanctifying grace. The things that now agitate the world are somewhat more fundamental: the existence of a God transcending nature, the continued life of the disembodied soul, an absolute distinction between good and evil, the possibility of Divine intervention in human affairs.

For us, then, as it seems to me, Plato and Aristotle have a message, even more vital than they had for the people of the Early Church and the Middle Age. By all means read the Fourth Gospel, read the *Imitation of Christ*, read the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine for evidence of Christianity. But if you would like some outside testimony to the truth, take up the *Phædo* of Plato, and read it carefully, with discernment. It is pure gold, but not all of it. And as you put it down you will say, "What a fine Christian this man would have been!"

No attempt at a Bibliography has been made. The literature of Plato and Aristotle is immense; but little of it matters in comparison with their own writings, most of which have been admirably translated. *Cf.* Lectures xx. and xxii.

THE RELIGION OF EARLY ROME

By C. C. Martindale, S.J.

In these pages we propose to describe the development and character of the religion of the Romans from the earliest times to 27 B.C., the birth-year of the Roman Empire.

I

Sources

Our ancient authorities, for the earliest periods especially, are few and fragmentary.

Of first importance are the ancient Roman Calendars, fragments of some thirty of which have been excavated. They contain the names of the Roman religious festivals, with explanatory notes, and have been published by Mommsen in the *Collection of Latin Inscriptions*, vol. i. 1893. A few MS. calendars exist, and Ovid's poem on the Calendar—the *Fasti*—contains valuable folk-lore and ritual data. It was published after the death of Augustus in A.D. 14. Of great value to us are *On the Latin Language* and *On Agriculture* by Varro, a famous scholar who lived 116–28 B.C. The first of these quotes largely from the *Pontifical Books*, the loss of which is disastrous for our study. From Varro's *Ancient Lore, Human and Divine*, also lost, Saint Augustine and Tertullian quote much. Verrius Flaccus, tutor of the grandsons of Augustus, annotated a Calendar which has been identified with that found at Praeneste. His *Dictionary* survives, as

abridged by *Festus* in the second century A.D. Varro and Verrius are constantly quoted by early commentators on Vergil, etc., *e.g.* SERVIUS, and by the antiquarians and grammarians of the first few centuries A.D., *e.g.* A. GELLIUS, NONIUS, etc. DIONYSIUS of Halicarnassus and PLUTARCH (about 30 B.C. and 80 A.D. respectively) were foreigners at Rome, keenly interested in all they saw, and left much valuable information. For this early period, INSCRIPTIONS are less plentiful and useful than later. They are best consulted in the *Collection of Latin Inscriptions* (Berlin), 2nd ed., 1893, and that called *Orelli-Henzen.*

II

ORIGIN

The Latins, originally a nomad, pastoral people, very gradually settled into agricultural life, and formed, first, village communities, then the city Rome. The development of their religion kept pace with that of their social and political conditions, and in time—especially during the Etruscan dynasty, which so strongly influenced the whole people towards the close of the monarchy, *c.* 500 B.C.—it became overlaid with many Greek names and customs, beneath which we must get if we want to understand the genuine Roman Religion, which never quite disappeared.

MAGIC? — Some writers assert that the practice of Religion is always preceded by that of Magic, and that among the Latins this rule suffered no exception. They would define Magic as the attempt to influence nature by a piece of ritual often resembling, in some way, the object for which you perform it—*e.g.* to obtain rain, you pour out water; to obtain sun, you light a fire. This is called *sympathetic* Magic. Its failure, they argue, may have first aroused the "religious consciousness,"

which they define as the "sense of dependence" on a power higher than what is merely natural. The Latins had such rites; but they survive historically only as embedded in religious observances. Moreover, we deem it a serious mistake to assert that *any* sort of consciousness was wholly absent from the primitive mind; or again, that any definite, clear-cut view was present in it: we shall therefore pass straight on to the religious worship of the Latins. It is perhaps impossible to find, historically, an act of which it can be said, "this is *pure* magic, and in no way 'religious,'" in the history of the Romans. *Cf.* Lecture I. 9, 10; VI. 12.

NATURE-WORSHIP.—Worship was first evoked in the Latins by their consciousness of the Powers of Nature. They grew aware of forces around them, other and stronger than themselves, which could resist and defeat, or help and prosper them. Such were the Sun, the Springs, the hard Earth. Such existed in all things that had life different from, or stronger than, their own—*e.g.* certain animals, immemorial trees, even the inert boundary stone. To the very end, such stones and special trees were regarded as sacred: the *oak* became attached to Jupiter; the *woodpecker* and *wolf* belonged to Mars. But to say that the Latins, or anyone else, first consciously worshipped the stone itself, and afterwards a Power *in* the stone, and afterwards merely honoured the stone for the sake of a spiritual Power, is to saddle the primitive mind with definite philosophical notions which it certainly did not possess. *Cf.* I. 4; XI. 3–6.

The Romans (so to call the people who afterwards built Rome) took up an attitude towards these Forces which was determined by their own *Character* and *Circumstances.*

THE ROMAN CHARACTER.—The Roman *character* was simple, robust, practical, unimaginative, "canny," profoundly impressed with the idea of contract, whether

in Law or Business. In consequence, the Roman invented no *mythology*: he did not imagine his gods in human shape, much less write stories about them. Such tales as he had were few, often repeated, short, frequently coarse, and reflecting the manners of an untamed agricultural community. Hence, too, he had no religious *art*: it would be impossible to *illustrate* this paper. Till he crossed with the Greeks, he made no images of his divinities: to the end the old cults of Vesta focussed in an imageless shrine. Finally, he had no *philosophy*: he speculated not at all on the nature of God, or the origin and destiny of the universe and the soul. He wanted to use his world, not to think about it.

NUMINA.—The old Roman then worshipped *powers*, *numina*, rather than gods conceived anthropomorphically, *i.e.* humanwise. They were often sexless, shapeless, named only by their function—what they *did*, not what they *were*, was important. Their names reflect, therefore, the occasions on which human need asks for or fears spiritual influences, and are grouped round the scenes of eternal human interests — the nursery, the kitchen, and the fields. Cunina watched the baby's cradle (*cunae*); Statana taught him to *stand*; Levana *lifted* him if he fell; Ossipaga fixed his bones: generation, conception, birth, and childhood were surrounded with deities, each with its special function; for this you invoked it; its work done, you invoked it no more. Aesculus looked after your bronze coins (*aes*); Argentarius, your silver (*argentum*). Iterduca led you forth on a journey; Domiduca led you home again. Nodotus watched over the swelling (*nodus*) of the grain; Volutina over the enfolding sheath; Patulena over its opening. Later, the priests marshalled these tiny gods into a sort of litany; they were called *di indigites* or *indigitamenta*, the gods whose *action* (*ago*) lay *within* (*endo*, in) a definite

sphere. These extraordinary lists, the product of a cut-and-dried, legal-minded age, have been called the solitary religious innovation of Rome. Notice that the shapes of their names are often *adjectival*; they represent ways of acting, not definite personalities: *divus pater Vaticanus* (divine Speech-father) was the full title of the god in his work of teaching a baby how to speak. Sometimes these spiritual influences fall into groups; the open country was full of strange sounds, and the *Fauni* (*fari*, to speak), spirits of voices, were evolved. The Semones, Karmentes, etc., were other such conceptions, with no more individuality than our "brownies" or "pixies."[1]

EVOLUTION OF THE ROMAN FEASTS.—The *Circumstances* of the Roman People, pastoral, then agricultural, then political, and the eternal interests of birth and family life and funeral, originated FEASTS, where the character of their Religion is admirably revealed. From what we already know of it, we are not surprised to find that the early Feasts are never commemorations of definite *personalities*, like our Saints' days, or of "historical" events like Easter or Pentecost, but are neuter plural names, like the early Greek Festivals,[2] denoting a special piece of ritual performed for a special purpose, rather like our Rogation-days (*asking*-days) or Low Sunday, which in Latin is called *Dominica in Albis*—White Sunday—because of the white clothes laid aside on that day in the early Church by those recently baptized. No doubt these feasts often evolved a new cult-title for the god. Thus, to avert red blight (*robigo*) from your crops, you performed the *Robigalia*—the Blight-service; you made a procession, sacrificed *red* puppies ("sympathetic" magic this), and attached to the god, vaguely, the title

[1] See, on the *indigitamenta*, St. Augustine, *City of God*, iv. 8, 11; vi. 9; vii. 23; Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, ii. 11, 15. [2] *Cf.* XI. 20.

Robigus, the object with which in this particular instance he was concerned.

i. PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL FESTIVALS.—The Roman year originally began with March, and in matters civil and religious still did down to the time of Julius Cæsar.[1] The feasts in it are especially concerned with the beginning of the year's interests, especially of agriculture. Until Greek influences identified Mars with the war-god Ares, he was primarily a vegetation-god, as the oldest prayers to him abundantly prove; the dedication of this month to him marks it as a vegetation-month. In it two curious but quite usual pieces of ritual were resorted to. One was the activity of Mars' "dancing-priests," the *Salii*; the other, the expulsion of *Mamurius Veturius*. From March 1–24, these priests, dressed in striped military cloaks, leaped and danced, striking an old-fashioned shield with a spear, and singing a hymn to Mars—so old that its meaning, in classical times, was already forgotten, and we can only partially translate it. This ritual is found all the world over, and it combines two very primitive notions: one, that by clashing metal, etc., you can scare away evil influences; the other, that by beating or lashing an object (even inanimate!) you provoke it to activity. The Salii, then, averted all that might harm the crops of the coming year, and, by their dancing, provoked the earth to bear generously.[2] In the other ceremony, a man, named for the occasion Mamurius Veturius—Mamurius is a variant of Mars, and Veturius is almost

[1] September, October, November, December, still bear the names 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th months, reckoning from March as 1st; July and August were 5th and 6th months, till the names of Julius Cæsar and Augustus respectively were attached to them. The Romans always regarded months as sacred; the 1st day of each was always dedicated to Juno, and the 13th or 15th to Jupiter.

[2] See examples in Frazer's *Golden Bough*, ed. ii. vol. ii. 157–182. Since, in our limits, it is impossible to prove all we say, we are careful to advance only such explanations as are almost universally admitted, or to qualify our suggestion of them as tentative.

certainly from the same root as *Vetus* = old—was beaten out of the town. There can be little doubt that he represented the *Old Mars*, the effete vegetation-power of the last year, expelled to leave the New Mars free to energize. This extraordinary notion is common to the most widely separated nations, ages, and races. The Old Year, or Death or Poverty, Hunger or Sickness, are periodically expelled, and often the actor is at least symbolically slain. Sometimes all the evil in a town or district would be regarded as concentrated in one man; he would be expelled and slain. Condemned criminals (as at Rhodes), puppets (at Delphi), animals, were often substituted for a human victim, if such there orginally was, as manners grew more humane. Most probably the scape-goat among the Jews was but a sanctioned and sanctified form of this. *Cf.* XI. 20.

April (from *aperire*, to open) is the real opening of the spring; in it Venus, originally a *garden*-goddess, was celebrated, and it is full of agricultural feasts. On April 15th were observed the *Fordicidia*, the sacrifice of unborn calves, to procure the growing of the corn still hidden in the womb of the earth (another case of sympathetic magic). On the 19th a similar feast, the *Cerealia*, was held to invoke the good-will of Ceres, the creative power: Ceres or Cerus, for the sex of this deity was uncertain, has its name derived from the root of *creare*, to create. Notice the vagueness of idea, the lack of human interest. Only Greek influence coloured Ceres into a "corn-goddess," and identified her with Demeter. The *Parilia* of April 21st are exceptionally well known. Ovid, who joined in celebrating it, leaves a long account (*Fasti*, iv. 721–782) of both its forms, public and urban, and private and rural. Pales was the presiding deity (again originally sexless) of sheepfolds. On this day the pens were garlanded; fires of straw, olive and laurel, sprinkled with sulphur, were lit; the shepherd drove

the sheep through them, and offered milk and millet cakes to Pales. He then begs pardon for his unknown faults—if unwittingly he has trodden on holy ground, disturbed sacred fountains, used sacred tree branches for profane ends. He asks prosperity for his farm throughout the next year, repeating the prayer four times eastward; washes his hands in the pure dew; drinks of the oblation of milk and wine, and leaps through the fire himself. In Rome, on the Palatine, all this was enacted in a somewhat conventional form, and the highest religious officials assisted at the ceremony. It is eminently characteristic of the Roman to make a simple process of *disinfection* the kernel of a religious ceremony!

The *Vinalia*, on April 23rd, in honour of Venus, were to secure a good vine-crop for the next autumn; the feast was repeated at the ripening of the grapes in August. The *Robigalia*, mentioned above, were on April 25th, and the Roman people clung so tenaciously to their procession on that day, that, like many other practices not in any essential way *heathen*, it was retained in a Christianized form; and on April 25th we still sing litanies in procession for the year's crops. The *Floralia*, or Flower-feast, was held on April 28th, and was a feast of great popular licence. In May the only ceremony to note here is the *Ambarvalia*, a procession round the fields on three consecutive days—a practice adhered to by the Christian population, and tied down to the three days preceding the Ascension by the Church, that the haphazard semi-pagan custom might be regulated and Christianized. Of the many other interesting agricultural festivals of the Roman year, we will mention only the *Saturnalia*, held in honour of Saturnus (the Seed-god —*sata*, crops) on December 17th, and later extended over several days. It was the popular holiday of the year: slaves had absolute licence; legal and business

transactions were completely suspended; presents were given.[1]

ii. DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL FESTIVALS.—Though the *political* festivals marked a later stage of society than the agricultural, family life had always been of extraordinary importance among the Romans, and its festivals are extremely ancient. In the earliest times the whole *house* was sacred, and especially the door (*ianua*) and the hearth (Greek: *Hestia*, originally *Vestia*). Hence developed the peculiarly Roman worship of Janus and of Vesta. *Ianus*, originally the *numen* of the house-door, became gradually the "spirit" of all doors or arches: he is called *Patulcus* (Opener); *Cloesus* (Closer); he looks before and after, and, later on, is figured as two-faced. He is regarded as the god of all *beginnings*; of the morning; of the year; and the month called after him is ultimately made into the *first* month; the first sacrifice of the year (on January 9th) is for him. He presides over the generation of human life; he is called *principium deorum*; he enters the cult of the state, and is invoked first in all prayers. The cult of Vesta illustrates better than any other the Roman "religionizing" of the most commonplace incidents of life; the utilitarian substratum in their spirituality. In primitive communities *fire* is a precious thing, hard to obtain, important to preserve. The king's fire, at least, is never to go out. His sons blow it into flame if it is extinguished; his daughters watch over it; they also keep the common store. Hence began the College of *Vestals*,[2] maidens vowed to chastity, who preserved the undying fire on the central hearth of

[1] It may be worth mentioning that it had nothing to do with the fixing of the date of Christmas Day. *Cf.* XIV. 29; XVI. 12.

[2] The priests of special deities, *Flamines*, derived their name from *flare*, to blow: *i.e.* they originally lit the fires their sisters guarded. But except in the case of the Flamen *Dialis* (priest of Jove), and in a lesser degree, that of the Flamens of Mars and Quirinus, they never played any important part at Rome.

Rome. Though, after the Revolution, the very *name* of "king" was abolished, the *religious* head of the state, the Pontifex Maximus, retained it—*Rex* Sacrorum, he was called, and lived in the *Regia* or royal house close to the Vestals' convent. Legally and officially he was regarded as *father* of the Vestals, who had, too, social prerogatives of extraordinary distinction. In everything that concerned the agricultural prosperity of Rome, the harvest and seedtime festivals, the Vestals officiated. It was they who prepared the sacrificial meal then used. From June 7–15 the Roman matrons come in procession to the sacred state-hearth; mills are decorated; millers' and bakers' donkeys are garlanded with cakes and flowers, and parade the town. A quaint incident shows the *stereotyping in religious shape* of the humblest domestic details. The year's accumulation of refuse was solemnly swept out of the Vestals' precincts, and the sweepings carried down to the Tiber; this was regarded as a ceremonial act: "When the refuse has been carried away, the holiday is over," says the Ritual.

The worship of the *Penates*—the gods of the household *store* (*penus*)—similarly passed from a domestic into a political celebration, and the city had its Penates too. In the case of Rome, the City is *Family Life* "writ large." The *Lares*, again, were household spirits, one in particular being called the Lar Familiaris, who received special worship at every family event—births, marriages, deaths; even when a child spoke its first word. Their rural worship was the *Compitalia*—the Cross-roads feast in December or January; their state worship was on May 1st, for they too developed into protectors of the *state*. Even the most purely personal notion — one incredibly difficult to explain in modern terms—the *Genius*, followed the same course. Originally, as far as one can see, just the spiritual power concerned with a

man's humanity, and his power of begetting his like, it became felt to be, as it were, his *spiritual equivalent*; guardian-spirit, astral shape, vital principle, are all notions—generally too concrete—which approximate to that of *Genius*. Yet we come to hear of the Genius of the Roman People, of the City Rome, etc. The Genius of the Emperor was later on (*cf.* XIV. 5; XV. 15) involved in Emperor-worship; we hear it invoked as "be thou male or female," though it was normally masculine: a woman's spiritual *replica* was her *Juno*,[1] worshipped on her birthday, as his *Genius* was on a man's. The *Paganalia* was the feast of the pre-urban village communities (*pagi*); the *Fornacalia*, of the common district-ovens; the *Septimontia*, of the seven divisions of the first extension of early Rome from the Palatine. The 23rd of March and of May was called the *Tubilustrium*, because on it the trumpets were cleansed by which the people were summoned on the 24th to assist at the public state sanctioning of wills.

We will conclude with two civic festivals, both based on a very primitive piece of ritual. It seems beyond doubt that men have very generally believed that by slaying and feeding upon a sacred animal, its life and sacredness passed into them, and that if many shared in the meal, an inviolable bond was formed between each and all of the feasters and their god. The ritual differed in different places—drinking, or smearing one's self with the hot blood, or wearing the animal's skin, might replace the meal; the significance is, however, generally clear. Now, in April, on a day fixed each year, deputies from all the ancient Latin communities met on the Mons Albanus (Monte Cavo of to-day): the Roman consul (when Rome rose to presidency) offered milk; other deputies, cheese,

[1] Later, this important female divinity was identified with the important Greek goddess Here, and apparently only so became an object of mythology and "wife of Jupiter," etc. *Cf.* p. 16; XI. 16.

sheep, etc., agricultural offerings of earliest origin. An unblemished, unyoked white heifer was then slain, and the flesh divided among all the deputies. To lose one's share implied rupture of the tie which bound these civic units: an error, however slight, of ritual involved the repetition of the entire function. Truce was made while the feast lasted, if any two states were at variance; alliance, if existing, was renewed. "Perhaps no festival, Greek or Roman," writes Mr. Warde Fowler,[1] "carries us over such a vast period of time as this; its features betray its origin in the pastoral age, and it continued in uninterrupted grandeur till the end of the third century, or even later. . . . We are here in presence of the oldest and finest conception of the Latin race, which yearly acknowledges its common kinship of blood and seals it by partaking in the common meal of a sacred victim, thus entering into communion with the god, the victim, and each other."

On February 15th, again, took place the *Lupercalia*.[2] Goats were slain and flayed at the *Lupercal*, a grotto on the Palatine, the hill on which Rome first was built. Two youths, naked but for the reeking hides in which they clad themselves, raced round the Palatine, striking *walls* and *women* with the bleeding thongs torn from the skins. We omit many complicated details, and will not defend any elaborate explanation of the ritual. This much is certain. The thongs were called *februa*

[1] *Roman Festivals*, p. 96.

[2] It used to be said (even by Catholic writers, *e.g.* Baronius) that Pope Gelasius (492-496) invented the feast of the Purification to withdraw attention from the Lupercalia (with its torchlight procession) on the 15th of February. Since the discovery of the "Pilgrimage of Aetheria" this can no longer be maintained. The feast was already celebrated in her time (*c.* 390) in Jerusalem on 15th February—forty days after the Eastern Christmas day, *i.e.* 6th January. It probably reached Rome from the East, and was then transferred to 2nd February, *i.e.* forty days after the Western Christmas, 25th December. *Possibly* the Pope added the procession of blessed candles, associating this with Simeon's hymn.

(as was anything which possessed a purifying virtue —from its purificatory rites, etc., *February* got its name), and their blow was thought to evict evil and produce fertility. Clearly the divine life, considered present in the sacred sacrificial goats, was intended to pass into the community represented by the chosen youths, into the city walls, which they struck, and into the women, so that their children might be many and strong. The practice of throwing an old shoe after a bride descends immediately from this old practice of striking married women with the Lupercalian leather.[1]

ATTITUDE TO THE DEAD.[2]—The Roman attitude towards the dead expressed itself in two main celebrations, over and above the private funeral ceremonies. No Aryan people, at any rate, has ever thought that death ended *all* life. The phantom of the dead man was supposed to go on living, in some vague way, in the tomb where the corpse was buried: hence food, or whatever had occupied him in life—armour, jewellery—even razors, mirrors, cosmetics—were buried with him. Hence the sacrifice of wife or slave on the tomb of husband and master. Their souls would pass straight down to him in the earth, and give him the desired tendance. But in the earlier ages of society, the dead were thought to have ill-will to the living; to be harmful and jealous spirits, ready to plunder earthly food, to drink human blood to re-enforce their pale life, could they once escape into the light. Hence the Roman celebration of the LEMURIA, on May 9th, 11th, and 13th. (The *Lemures* seem to have been the ghosts in this hostile character.) At midnight the head of each family would arise; with bare feet and washed hands he patrols the corridors, snapping his fingers to scare away the ghosts, flinging black beans over

[1] Or rather, from the general category of leather-flogging of which this is an instance.

[2] *Cf.* II. 3, 8, 19; IV. 1; VI. 26; VII. 26; VIII. 17–25; XI. 6–7, 12–13, 21.

his shoulder without looking behind him, and nine times he repeats, "With these beans I redeem myself and mine," and finally, after a lustration of sacred water and beating of bronze, he cries, nine times once more, "Ghosts of my ancestors, go hence." Of the details of this ritual we have no space to speak; as a whole it enters into a common class of "apotropaic" or *riddance* festivals. The ghosts on these three nights were "out and about" seeking human food; they fastened on the beans, and left all else untouched; at the nine times uttered spell they were evicted and the family was safe. This is exactly paralleled in the Greek spring festival of the *Anthesteria*. *Cf.* XI. 7.[1]

THE PARENTALIA.—A perfectly different conception of the state of the dead originated the *dies parentales*, or the All-Souls week of Rome, lasting from February 13–21. The state then did what the family did privately for its own dead upon their anniversaries. No longer considered as hostile spirits, envious of and dangerous to the living, they were now, as civilization advanced, regarded as still members of the family, living in the family tomb, in the "necropolis," the City of the Dead, outside that of the Living. The relatives then had a duty towards them; the *Ius Manium*, the Right of the Departed, was a regulated code. The family would go together to the tomb, offering honey, milk and oil, garlanding the place with violets and roses, partaking of a simple meal at the tomb, in which the dead were held to share: they would ask the dead for their blessing, and bid them farewell—*Salve, sancte parens*, "Farewell, holy father," were the words addressed to the now beatified soul.

[1] In every Latin foundation a trench was dug and closed with a stone, and probably served as the common store-house. It was called the *mundus*. Later on, probably owing to Græco-Etruscan influence, it was regarded as an ingress to the lower world; thrice a year, Aug. 24th, Oct. 5th, Nov. 8th, the stone was removed and the ghosts were thought to have free egress. No ritual grew up round this.

On the 22nd the whole family met once more at home at a common love-feast; all family feuds were, for that day at least, laid aside; places were set for the dead; the little statues of the household gods presided at the table: for one day, god, the living and the dead, dwelt peaceably together in one large family. This exquisite custom was known as the feast of the *Cara Cognatio* (or, of our Dear Kinsfolk), or the *Caristia* (of our Dear Ones). So holy was the week that all else was postponed to the claims of the dead: the temples were closed; no business might be carried on; no marriages celebrated.

THE GODS.—Of the great gods, there is, paradoxically, less to say. We repeat, in this early religion, *numina*, supernatural influences, rather than individualized gods and goddesses, were created by the religious sense of the Latins. Yet of Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, Juno, and Hercules, a few words must be said.

JUPITER.—*Iupiter* (*i.e.* Diovis-piter, father Diovis = Greek Zeus for Dieus; Sanskrit Dyaus) is the aboriginal Aryan god of the *bright* sky, common to all the Latin communities. His cult-titles are *Fulgur*, Jupiter of the Thunder-bolt; *Lucetius*, of the Light; *Summanus*, of Night-lightning. All spots struck by lightning are sacred to him, as are full-moon days, the 13th and 15th of the lunar months. *Tonitrualis*, of the Thunder; *Pluvius*, of the Rain, are among his names: the *Lapis Manalis*, the "pouring stone," a stone over which, in sympathetic magic, water was poured to elicit rain, was connected with him in the *aquaelicium* "water-eliciting" ceremony for rain. When his worship, as normally happened, was taken over by the state, he tended to interest himself ever more closely in state-concerns, and to stand as the primary bond of unity among the Latins. Hence his position as *Jupiter Latiaris* on the Alban Mount, and in the *Feriae Latinae* mentioned above (p. 11): when the City Rome

absorbed the Latin community, Jupiter of the Capitol, *Optimus Maximus*, the Greatest and Best, equally absorbed Jupiter of the Latins. He took on war-titles: *Stator*, stayer of rout: *Victor*, giver of victory: as to Jupiter *Feretrius*, the spoils which a Roman general took from a hostile general must be offered at his oak. The sacred *stone*, originally used to slay the victim when a treaty was made, became so closely connected with Jupiter (or, if it was originally identified with the god, which is quite doubtful, this notion became spiritualized), that *per Iouem lapidem*[1] became the most solemn attestation of an oath; in this character Jupiter evolved or was identified with a special personality, Dius Fidius, the god of Faith. Only when Etrusco-Greek art-forms had conquered, was Jupiter Optimus Maximus dressed in triumph-clothes, and set up, an earthenware image with scarlet-painted cheeks, on the curule chair in the Capitol. Ultimately, this temple personified Rome's majesty: in it boys passed from legal infancy to manhood; magistrates initiated in it their year of office; records of victory were there preserved, and the tribute of the subject states.

JUNO.—*Iuno*, as we said above, the Genius of *woman*, is especially connected with marriage and child-birth: in the latter case she was called *Lucina*, and here, and gradually on other points, followed a parallel course to Jupiter. She too is connected with storm and lightning and moon; she too, later, becomes the Queen (*Iuno Regina*), the city's Saviour (*Sospita*). *Cf.* XI. 16.

MARS.—But *Mars*, the favourite Roman god, starting, as we saw, as *numen* of vegetation in the old agricultural days, took on an increasingly *military* character as the circumstances of the people changed.

[1] Who shall decide whether the Roman *meant* "by Jupiter and by this stone," or "by Jupiter, *i.e.* this stone"? Certainly he had no clear and philosophical views on any such subject.

On March 19th and October 19th, the opening and close of the new seasons, the state arms were solemnly purified: with this he was connected, as with the *war-horse* races of February 27th and March 14th, and especially October 15th. Every five years the whole folk meets in military array, for purification and census on his field, the *Campus Martius*, and prayer is made for military success in the coming year.

QUIRINUS.—*Quirinus* was the god of the Colline community, joined to Jupiter and Mars in special worship as Rome expanded. Their *flamens*, or special priests, were the greatest: their triad maintained prime importance till the Etruscan trinity of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva eclipsed it. Of his cult and character we know but little.

MINERVA.—There were other deities who afterwards in Græco-Etruscan times attained pre-eminence —Minerva, for instance; a goddess, it would seem, of craftsmen, and hence assimilated to Athene. But into no Greek mould did so many primitive Latin notions flow as into that of Herakles, the strong and beneficent Greek hero, called in Latin Hercules. While the Dius Fidius, another old god of good faith —Semo Sancus—got closely connected with him, it was as the *numen* of male life, a kind of *Genius*, that he became popular, and especially attracted popularity by the character of kindliness which characterized the Greek Benefactor-hero. This is, however, a later development.

III

SPIRIT

We have so far given a bald account of the channels which the religious spirit of the Latins created for itself, as long as that spirit was left practically to itself. This system of religious worship was recognized by the Romans themselves as primitive and

uncontaminated by other ingredients. It was called the "religion of Numa," the early king to whom its regulations were mythically assigned.

It is now time to examine the nature of that religious spirit, the *feeling* of the Roman for the Divine in that early period. And, indeed, the genuine Roman attitude changed but little. It was, as has been already suggested, that of the practical man whose ideal is prosperous family life on a farm gradually evolving towards prosperous life as a citizen. All his religion is therefore one of things *to be done.* "Our ancestors," says Servius, on Vergil's picture of a shepherd idly praying without working (*G.* iii. 456), "put the whole of religion in *doing things* (*in experientia collocabant*)." Man finds himself in a relation with powers which are fundamentally interested in what interests him too, and they can and must be reckoned with. In consequence, almost all his acts in their regard are in the nature of a legal contract. His proper attitude to the gods was *pietas*, dutiful respect: the god showed the same towards his client. To neglect your part of the contract was *impietas*; to *over-step* it was *super-stitio*, an exaggeration. Hence *devotion*, as we call it, was no Roman ideal: mystical enthusiasm was a scandal to him. Private pieties were discouraged. Cato allows the slaves on the farm to celebrate one feast a year only (*On Agriculture*, 193). It was the master who was *ex officio* priest for his own *familia*, "household." He offered sacrifice in the name of all. Hence the concentration of public worship in the hands of the state officials and magistrates: there was no clerical caste. On the other hand, the exact performance of the contract was necessary, even as its terms were exactly stated beforehand. The god was given all his titles, to make sure of hitting on the right one. "Jupiter Optimus Maximus, or by whatever name you prefer to be called," notes Servius on Vergil (*Aen.* ii. 351).

"Be thou male or female" is, as we saw, a not unreasonable formula whereby to address the vague, fluid *numina*. So, too, you do not say, "I will sacrifice to thee wine," for then the god might take this to refer to your whole cellarful. You prepare a cup, and say, touching it, "With *this* wine I make offering to thee." Exactly in the same way, whenever a dispute about an estate, etc., was going forward in court, a clod would be brought from it, and every time the estate was mentioned, the representative turf would be *touched*. "The old Romans," says Aulus Gellius (ii. 28), "were, in the organization of worship and in their dealings with the gods, as in all other duties of life, most *careful* and *accurate*." Cicero defines *pietas* as "justice towards the gods"; sanctity, as "the science of Ritual." To ensure exact performance, the Pontifex stood beside the sacrificing magistrate and dictated the words of offering to him, which he repeated precisely, though in certain cases neither had the least idea what the obsolete Latin meant. All this argued a certain *fear* of the gods, and indeed due *awe* was a virtue which the old Roman prized. The head was veiled as the altar was approached: distractions were rigorously guarded against.[1] "Religion and fear are intimately connected," Servius explicitly argues (on Verg., *Aen.* ii. 715); and again he (wrongly but significantly) derives his Latin *deus* (god) from the Greek δέος (fear). But we cannot say that the normal Roman Religion in any sense darkened the lives of its adherents, though it attended their every action and was always in the background. The *pax deum* was what was sought, the being on good terms with the gods; and when the worshipper pays what he has vowed, his formula is, "I have paid my vow *with right good will*, as was fitting." The ideal state is *the extension of the terms of united family life to the gods.*

[1] "In the temple," says Quintilian, *Decl.* 265, ". . . we refrain from speech, we compose our feelings, we keep even our thoughts silent."

The household Lares and Penates were always treated with a sort of genial, affectionate respect.

Our criticism on this attitude we reserve. We must now consider the development of the religion of Numa under the later monarchy and the Republic.

IV

Degeneration

Process. — The change was not universal, nor immediate, nor due to a single cause; but rather an infiltration of *Greek* ideas, stories, and practices came from several points at once, and these modified what they found. War and trade caused this, acting chiefly from Greek Sicily (whence even Asiatic notions gained some foothold) and Etruria. The Etruscans were largely of mingled Greek blood, and the later dynasty of Roman kings was Etruscan. The development is in the anthropomorphic direction: the gods and goddesses, more clearly pictured, need *temples* (of which the oldest cult has nothing to tell us) in which to live. Statues henceforward make the gods frankly human in appearance, each with his own attributes. Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the Etruscan triad, invade the Capitol; on the 15th of September, the birthday of the temple, took place the famous *Epulum Iovis*, "Banquet of Jupiter," in which the magistrates and the senate took part, while the statue of Jupiter, in triumphal garb, reclined on a couch, and at his sides Juno and Minerva had each her chair. This gorgeous and frankly polytheistic and iconic ritual, if not the whole Banquet, was due to Etruscan influence, grafted into the far simpler and more spiritual worship of old days. Not, however, till 399 B.C. took place the first (official) *lectisternium*, or *couch-spreading*, a purely Greek festival, in honour usually of a triad, or pairs, of gods. The first celebrated three pairs of non-Roman

divinities: Apollo and Latona, Herakles and Artemis, Hermes and Poseidon. Couches were laid out for the dressed and decorated statues or busts of the gods, and this was perhaps more frequently performed at seasons of special thanksgiving (*supplicationes*) than of intercession. Meanwhile new names appear—Mercurius, for instance: Ceres is definitely treated as a goddess and equivalent to Demeter: alien cults prosper, as that of Fortuna, introduced, so it was said, by Servius Tullius. It is thought by some[1] that during the third century a reaction took place "against a tendency so expansive and denationalizing." It did not, however, succeed; and this period—*i.e.* to *c.* 200 B.C.—marks a steady Græcizing of the old Roman worship, at any rate in official circles. That of Hercules was, perhaps, the only foreign cult which attained high popular favour. Now, too, a tendency, always present, is intensified: that of idealizing the favourite virtues of the Romans, and erecting temples in their honour—Good Faith, Honour and Valour, Concord, *Mens* (Mind; almost = Inspiration): even Fear (= Awe) and Pallor.

DECADENCE.—At the close, however, of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire, it has become a commonplace to lament that all religion is dead. Temples were in ruins: feasts and religious brotherhoods had lapsed: Crassus laments in Cicero (*de Or.* iii. 33) that the study of the *ius Pontificium*, priest-law, was abandoned: poets like Horace and Propertius tell how cobwebs veiled the altars; how the sacred images are smoke-begrimed in crumbling shrines. Central temples, each once a focus of religious life, were tottering: Jupiter Feretrius was unroofed; Juno Sospita filthy and deserted. We propose to indicate the reasons for this decay. They may be described as political, educational, and spiritual.

ALIENATION OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.—We said that the public officers of religion were the

[1] Warde Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

magistrates. Cicero indeed declares (*pro Dom.* i.)—though in a speech addressed to Pontifices something must be allowed to flattery—that this identification of civic and religious supremacy was the *chef d'œuvre* of the political science of antiquity. It is certain that in this way conflict between State and Church could not arise, nor even between State and Conscience; since the Roman Religion consisted, as we have seen, almost entirely in the observance of an external ritual in which Conscience played little, if any, part. But the magistrates had, in the first instance, been only *patricians*; and even while the lowest classes gathered power and became more conscious of themselves and their rights, more numerous and rich, better educated and more efficient, yet the high religious offices were kept as long as possible in the hands of the patricians. While they kept them, not only did the middle classes, as we should probably call them, find themselves *excluded* from all public worship, but they noticed that whenever a popular law was to be voted, a patrician official discovered some religious motive to obstruct it. In consequence, not only did the mass of the people get out of touch with the national religion, but when at last public opinion forced open the close corporation of the priesthood, and admitted the lower classes thereto, the popular vote chose men who had long been unaware of, and cared nothing for, the traditions which, many of them, had come to be the exclusive property of certain great families.

Greek Drama and Philosophy.—The influx of the Greek spirit, again, was a corrupting influence among both high and low. It reached the people, not only by a constant infiltration of Greek notions, of the amusing and the lascivious stories which the irreverent and picturesque Greek mind constantly invented, and which in the formless, unhuman Roman worship found little if any mythology to supplant,

but by way of the comic poets, of whom Plautus (died 184 B.C.) and Terence (159 B.C.) are the best known to us, and who translated into Latin, and everywhere acted, Greek comedies where the gods were treated in a spirit of broad farce, and the holiest rites burlesqued. The dramatists, then, of Rome curiously justified Plato's puritanic decision, when he determined to banish them from his ideal state; and while Plautus laughed away the feeling of religious reverence, Ennius (died 169 B.C.), by translating sceptical Greek works—(the *Sacred History* of Euhemerus, for instance, where the gods were represented as no more than half-forgotten, myth-transfigured men; or the poem in which Epicharmus explains them as mere allegories of physical phenomena)—sapped the intellectual foundations, such as they were, of religious belief in the more educated Roman classes.

Under the combined influence, then, of social disaffection from the guardians of the once prevalent and still official cult, and of a popularized and somewhat licentious rationalism, the bulk of the people was absolutely alienated from the practice of religion, except indeed in such social layers or such individuals as lived wholly apart from the current of the age. Even such forms of private religious practice as had never been affected by state worship gradually suffered from the growing flood of democratic rationalism. In the higher classes a blind conservatism of the outside ritual, combined with a general scepticism as to the fact-value of their religious categories, occasioned a universal formalism which at once provoked and concealed the death of all true religious worship. Perhaps in the question of *auguries* and *auspices* this was earliest and most noticeable. From the first, the Romans' strong consciousness of the presence of God and of the importance of obtaining his approbation, had evolved a whole code of signs in which that

approbation might be looked for *before* entering on any course of action. The details of this practice need not here be catalogued; they fall into two categories—signs given by *birds* (the *auspicia*), their cry, their flight, their way of eating grain, etc., and all other manner of signs (*auguria*), from lightning, chance incidents, etc., etc. From the outset, Roman common-sense had invented a bluff casuistry, which dealt with occasions when manifest utility and the ritual exigencies clashed. Cicero, in his amusing *On Divination* (ii. 36), reminds us that not the *omen* was important, but the *seeing* of it. Marcellus, in consequence, drew the curtains of his litter whenever he wanted to go anywhere, for fear of seeing an omen which should prevent him. Similarly, on days when work was forbidden by religion, the kindly law suffered you to bathe *sick* cattle, for instance; and a further interpretation suffered you to bathe them *lest they should fall sick*! You were allowed to prevent any obviously impending disaster, even on a *dies nefastus* (*i.e.* holiday, when work was forbidden); soon, you could continue then any work previously commenced, lest by interruption it should deteriorate. *Haruspices*, *i.e.* soothsayers, an analogous Etruscan importation, had by Cato's time fallen into such disrepute, that he said no two Haruspices could look at one another without laughing. The only sphere where the office of these omen-mongers remained important was that of political enactment. Bibulus, consul in 59, who had quarrelled with his colleague Julius Cæsar, saw omens whenever Cæsar wanted to carry through any political action. Augurs "heard thunder on the left" when it had not thundered at all. These ridiculous incidents proved the total failure of belief in any reality expressed in the ritual.

A "Political" Attempt at Reformation.—It is interesting that a strenuous effort at reformation had failed, as all must fail which are the outcome of

anything but sincere religious zeal in the reformers. Scipio the Less (185–129 B.C.) had formed a brilliant circle of literary and political friends. Scipio was a shrewd and unimpassioned statesman, cultivated, liberal, and conciliatory. Panætius was among his friends, a Stoic philosopher, wholly out of touch with popular worship. Lucilius, a clever satirist, ridiculed the antiquated religious forms as bitterly as the foibles of his fellow-men. The historian Polybius was a rationalizer: we assign to the gods, says he, what we cannot understand. Not a circle, one would imagine, where religion would find friends! Yet every one of these men dispute hotly in favour of the maintenance of the traditional cult and pontifical privileges from political motives. Clever politicians, they argue, invented the Roman cult to "coerce the people." "Mystic terrors and all that sort of tragic *mise en scène*," says Polybius, "are good to keep in hand the masses" (*Polybius*, vi. 56). On no account must such a hold on them be loosened! Lælius defends the Religion of Numa in a speech which Cicero (*On the Nature of the Gods*, iii. 17) calls "pure gold." "It's awkward to deny the existence of the gods," Cicero suggests (*ibid.* i. 22). "In public, yes," is a pontiff's answer in effect; "but in private conversation we can discuss freely." Scævola, pontifex maximus (died 82 B.C.), distinguishes the Religion of the Poets, of the Philosophers, and of the State: with regard to the stories of the first and the reasonings of the second, one may please one's self; the third must be scrupulously respected. And, in effect, a certain external activity goes on; odd cult titles are evolved: *Knights' Good-luck*; the *Luck of To-day* (*Fortuna Huiusce Diei*), etc. Literary ingenuity worked out quaint parallels between Roman and Greek cults and gods.

CICERO.—The last great name of the Republic is Cicero. His voluminous writings perfectly well reveal

the general state of religion in the educated classes of his day. In his speeches, he adopts the old Roman attitude, and is all for the reverent preservation of the old forms, just as an unbelieving Briton might boast, on a platform, of the National Church and of our duty to contribute towards the support of the Episcopate. In his philosophical writings, he relentlessly ridicules the popular worship and superstition, and translates into Latin an immense deal of various Greek philosophies expressive of a sublimated natural theology, a refined credence in the existence and attributes of God, and of the immortality of the soul. Cicero always believed thoroughly in himself, except in moments of depression; he liked fancying himself the vehicle, for Rome, of the highest Greek thought, and no doubt believed what he wrote while he was writing it. It is in his private letters that the man as he really is reveals himself. In them there is no spark of religious belief or feeling; no least glimmer of hope illuminates his grief in the death of his little daughter; they are the writings of a cultivated, sensitive, but wholly worldly man.

An Antiquarian Attempt.—One other brief and almost pathetic effort to revive religious fervour was made by Ælius Stilo, tutor of Varro and Cicero, and his circle. Varro's books, mentioned above, are due to this movement to restore religion by a minute archæological examination and reproduction of old rites and usages, much as though it were hoped by a close study of the principles of Gothic architecture and the Sarum Ritual to effect a religious revival in England.

A Survival. Interest in the Dead.—In one point only the popular religion seems never to have failed, and that is, the tendance of the dead; no doubt, because here men were made conscious, in spite of themselves, that they had come up against a reality—a fact, indeed, which forced them to look beyond this

life. Tombs are built along the highroads that the passers-by, and their whispered prayer for the buried souls, may be frequent. Care of the tomb is still of prime importance. In bequests, gardens are mentioned, whence roses and violets may for ever be plucked to deck the dead man's grave: a citizen of Sassina bequeathed a hundred graves for such of his fellow-townsmen as should be too poor to buy one (Orelli, 4404). The epitaphs are rarely cynical or unbelieving. *Health!* or *Be the earth light to thee*, are the commonest. *Sacred to eternal sleep*; *Eternal Home*, appear. The dead man asks for prayers, and promises gratitude. "Whatever each of you wish for me who am dead, may it likewise be yours, living and dead" (Orelli, 7395). The dead are asked to appear to the living. "If tears avail aught, show thyself in dreams to mine eyes" (*C.I.L.*, ii. 4427). An exquisite prayer is found: "I implore you, most holy spirits of the dead, consider my husband committed to your charge, and deign to be most generous to him, that in the hours of night I may behold him, and the swifter and more easily pass to where he is" (Orelli, 4775). "Thou that doubtest if the dead exist," say two maidens, "make thy vow, invoke us, and thou shalt *understand*!" (*ibid.* 7346). It is true that a minority of far other temper are found: "Eat, drink, amuse yourself, *come*!" (*C.I.L.*, 1877). "Once I was not, now I am not," is not uncommon (Orelli, 4809–4810). And all manner of Greek and foreign doctrines, teaching hell and happiness and purgation, were colouring the vague other world of the early Romans. But this belongs strictly to a later period, though already the amazing *guilds* or *unions*, so popular later, are beginning, of which the members were assured of a tomb, or a niche at least, in common sepulchres; of a lamp burning on their tomb; of flowers and simple feasting there on the anniversary of their birth. Through this tendance, then, of the dead, the religious spirit flowed from old to new. *Cf.* XIV. 26.

V

Criticisms

1. Contemporary. — In any criticism of the Roman Religion, it is worth remembering that contemporary Greek writers and philosophers admired it—the refined, thoughtful, artistic Greek respected and envied the product of the clumsy, commonplace, practical Roman. Almost as astonishing, this, as if a French literary man, on visiting our England in the days of Farmer George, should write, with sincerity, the panegyric of our religious virtues. This was due to the fact that Greece had grown rotten and was falling to pieces for lack of certain virtues which the Romans obviously possessed, and which were safeguarded and developed, even if not produced, by their religion. An extraordinary dignity of family life; a vigorous and disciplined patriotism; a calm gravity in worship; simple ritual; "sober cult," as Tertullian (*Apol.*, 25) actually calls the religion of Numa, praising it. And, indeed, even if Rome did not preach, she canonized, idealized, the right things; the "*staying*" virtues of a nation of rulers—honour, good faith, courage; men's virtues. And the College of Vestals taught that the essential virtue of maidens, chastity, was more precious than life. Polybius most strikingly reminds us that while the sacredness of a single Roman oath was sufficient to make the return of your deposit absolutely certain, no amount of promises, precautions, and witnesses could ever get back for you what you had once entrusted to a Greek. And the Roman deities, though vague, unpicturesque, and homely, were at least decent. "Report need not blush for thy history, O Rome," cries Propertius (III. xxii. 20), contrasting Rome with the Greek towns whose history usually started from some god's amour.

2. A Christian View.—We may cordially agree with this praise. Though, no doubt, to a great extent,

the *forms* of a natural religion are created by the character of the people who worship according to them, yet there is always reaction too; worship persisted in upon definite lines preserves and, indeed, augments that in a nation's character which originated it. Thus, for a long time, the admirable *family life* and healthy *country life* of the Romans was safeguarded; the state, modelled upon the family, was, on the whole, a noble variety of political organism, and the legal tendency which is so adversely criticized in the Roman religion tended to awake and augment the sense of discipline, of duty, of honour, and self-sacrifice for one's country, of sober generosity, which —God knows how rightly or how wrongly—we are fond of considering a peculiarly English virtue Certainly the Roman Religion was a religion for men. Moreover, it is difficult to think that, in finer natures, such practices will not have helped to awaken those nobler instincts—genuine humility, abnegation, chastity —of which some in every race and age are susceptible. But since no one can deny that the Romans had much simple affectionateness, this ubiquitous religion will especially have associated itself with all that a man most loved — his wife, his children, his fields; the religious *emotion*, so often denied by moderns to the Roman soul, must, in reality, have, at times, been keen. And the Roman's intense appreciation of tradition, antiquity, will easily have aroused in him a sense of the greatness and the majesty of God.

Yet we, taught by long experience—our own, and that of two thousand years of Christianity, and that of the historical collapse of the Roman worship itself—see clearly how inadequate a system it was. First, notice that even where we have praised it, as winning the affections and respect of its adepts, we mark a weakness in it. Men grew to love it because it clustered round what they *already* loved; they did not love their home better, because they supremely loved

religion and that religion consecrated their home, but *vice versa*. The great state which had created the religion which held it together was *eo ipso* greater than its creature; you loved the religious forms for the sake of their connection with the paramountly adored *Urbs Roma*. But a Christian (to use a crude example) does not grow to love Holy Communion, primarily at least, because he has long made it at his wife's side; nor esteem, say, Baptism, because without it he would not feel an English citizen, even assuming that all English citizens had always been baptized. A good man's love for his wife is sanctified and increased by the infinitely higher union to which the Body of Christ admits himself and her; a man should feel that Baptism must be sought, even if it involved abandoning his citizenship. In short, the Roman shaped first the religion which shaped him; it was not a Power put into him, lifting him to something to which, without it, he never could have reached.

In particular, the Roman religion was, as the Roman character was, *one-sided*. For instance, it did nothing for a man's intellect: directly he applied rational tests to his ritual action, its *raison d'être* largely disappeared: all reflection was for him a solvent, and must have continued so to be. A Greek, then, could never have adopted, even when admiring, the early Roman religion. *Universal*, then, that religion never could have been. Again, with the break-up of the Republican forms of political life, with the advent of social revolution, the traditional practices and ideals could not possibly subsist: a Roman of 100 A.D. could not really have had the religion of 100 B.C. *Permanent*, therefore, that early religion never could have been. For the hundred questions that even a moderate curiosity puts to itself, it had no answer. *Whence*? *whither*? and *why*? were met by it with silence. *Man* remained inexplicable to the human soul, and *God* as unintelligible. His

unity? His character? Sooner or later these dreadful riddles always announce themselves. While, too, it had no definite moral code (save as to the very simplest social and political relations) on which a man might lean in an hour of abandonment by right instincts, so, to the mystic aspirations which God has implanted in the heart of man, it had nothing to give: in this life its ideals centred; brave resignation is the natural attitude at death; hopes for the dying and the mourner had to be sought in alien faiths. And the complement to these transcendental yearnings, humanity's determination to have God nearer to it than invisible ubiquity suggests, the craving for an Incarnation witnessed to by most other pagan systems and justified by Christianity, received but little response in any period of the old Roman worship. And, in fine, though sense of guilt, of faults of omission and commission, is witnessed to by a hundred purificatory ceremonies and prayers, yet precisely here the *legal* aspect of the situation soon dominated; the sense of *sin* evaporated, if ever it existed; a husk of ritual remained. And once the bulk of the nation had in sentiment and conviction utterly drifted away from what the Civic Authority struggled to impose on them; once the Authority was no longer believed in by the masses and no longer itself believed in the essential value of what it tried to impose, the lowest superstition and the emptiest formalities alone remained to the nation: when the Authority itself fell, all fell with it.

In an ensuing paper we shall examine whether, after the long years of civil wars, where the career of Julius Cæsar shines like a meteor in dark clouds of misery and terror, the Roman people will evolve some more universal, permanent, and adequate religion. The greatest statesman the world has seen will organize a political system from which we are but now emancipating ourselves: what will he do for the soul athirst for God?

APPENDIX I.—It may be of interest to add examples of the notation of Feasts in the Calendars mentioned on p. 1. In the simpler yet almost complete Maffeian Calendar, June 9 is marked thus :—

H VEST . N FER VESTAE See p. 10. H is the letter of the day, calculating A–H from Jan. 1. N = *Nefastus* (*dies*); *scl.*, a non-business day. *Fer*[*iae*] *Vestae* = Holidays in honour of Vesta.

In the annotated Praeneste Calendar, April 25 stands thus :—

FERIAE . ROBIGO . VIA . CLAVDIA · AD. MILLIARIVM
C VII ROB Nº V. NE ROBIGO . FRVMENTIS . NOCEAT . SACRIFICIV(m)
ET . LVDI. CVRSORIBVS MAIORIBVS MINORIBVSQ
FIVNT [etc.

Cf. p. 5. VII is the number of days (Roman calculation) before May 1. Nº probably means the day is a *half*-holiday. "Holidays to Robigus; on the Claudian Road at the 5th mile-stone lest the blight (*Robigo*) hurt the grain sacrifice and games with greater and lesser runners (?) are celebrated," etc.

APPENDIX II.—The following is a hymn of the Arval brothers, still in use in 218 A.D., the date of the inscription in which it was found, and long after. It is in very archaic, perhaps corrupted Latin, unintelligible to the reciters, but rigorously adhered to as inviolable ritual; *cf.* p. 19. Each phrase is repeated thrice :— "*Enos Lases iuuate—neue luerue Marmar sins incurrere in ploeres—satur fu, fere Mars! limen sali, sta berber!—semunis alternei aduocapit conctos—enos Marmor iuuato!—triumpe!* (five times)." Probably = "Help us, Lares [*cf.* 10]! Suffer not, Marmar [old name for Mars?], pain nor bane to rush upon the many [*luerue*, scl. *luem ruem*, pestilence, ruin]; be abundant (?), wild Mars! leap the threshold! stay (thy) raging [*berber* = *feruere* = to be hot?]. All shall invoke in turn the Semones [seed-spirits?] (p. 5). Help us, Marmor! Triumph!"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer.* 1902.

G. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, I., chaps. 1, 2, and II., chap. 3, §§ 4, 5. 1892.

Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique.* 1865.

De Broglie, *Problèmes et Conclusions de l'Histoire des Religions.* 1889.

Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic.* 1899.

C. Bailey, *The Religion of Ancient Rome.* 1907.

Th. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, I. xii. Tr. 1888.

Preller's *Römische Mythologie*, ed. iii., by H. Jordon. 1881.

Marquardt's *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, ed. i., by Wissowa. Berlin, 1885.

THE RELIGION OF IMPERIAL ROME

By C. C. Martindale, S.J.

In a preceding paper an account was given of the development and decay of the Roman Religion previous to the year 27 B.C., when the Roman Empire may be regarded as having definitely begun. In the following pages the course of Roman Religion will be traced from 27 B.C. to the year 312 A.D., when Constantine formally adopted the Christianity which from his time became the official religion of the Empire.

We shall not set down a list of our ancient authorities, as they are practically identical with all the writers of verse or prose, history or science or philosophy, who flourished during this epoch. To them must be added the henceforward numerous inscriptions which illustrate almost every point of religious thought and practice.

I

Revival of Religion

The Reforms of Augustus.—After almost a quarter of a century of appalling civil war, and with an immemorial tradition of maladministration in the provinces, a tremendous work of reconstruction was

placed in the hands of Octavianus, grand-nephew and adopted son of Julius Cæsar. He saw well that to try to reproduce a Roman world in the likeness of the old would be fatal and indeed futile. A far greater, far more coherent unity was to be created—the Empire. And to bind this mighty aggregate of nations into one whole, no conceivable tie must be neglected. Of all forces that make for unity, religion is the strongest. We are not therefore surprised to find, among the deliberately planned enterprises of Octavianus, a great Religious Revival.

At the very outset the Emperor assumed the name *Augustus*. In old Latin, what was "consecrated" to divine service was "august." The Emperor was to be, for Rome, the vehicle and the representative of the divine. "O Roman," sang Horace, one of the Court poets, "thou shalt continue to pay for the sins of thy forefathers, though thou art innocent, till thou shalt have rebuilt the temples, and the tottering shrines of the gods, and the images foul with black smoke. In so far as thou holdest thyself lower than the gods, thou rulest: this is the beginning and this the end: it is the neglect of the gods that has brought down a thousand sorrows on unhappy Italy!" So we see Augustus ordering the nobles to restore their family chapels: he expends 100 million sesterces (£800,000) in decorating temples: at Rome alone, in a single year, he restores eighty-two shrines. The poets wax eloquent over this. "Founder of Temples," cries Ovid to him, in almost the same words as does Livy, "O holy restorer of Temples!" He restored, too, ceremonies which indifference had allowed to lapse, or the wars interrupted. He revived the Lupercalia, and lengthened the popular Saturnalia. He increased the colleges of priests, and in particular favoured the Vestal Virgins: many religious confraternities he entered himself. In fact, he gradually surrounded himself with a religious aureole. He popularized

three cults, each with a dynastic signification: those of *Venus Genetrix*, the mythical foundress of his family; of *Mars Ultor* (Mars Avenger), who reflected the mystic interest of the gods back upon murdered Julius; *Apollo* "of the Palatine," under whose care Augustus regarded and represented himself in a quite special way. He restored the very ancient *Ludi Saeculares* (Century Games), changing, however, their character from one of gloom and worship of under-world deities into that of triumph and prosperity, which he liked to see associated with himself, and substituted in them Apollo and Diana, gods of light and splendour, for Dis and Proserpina, King and Queen of the Dead.

Religious Importance of the Emperor.—The gratitude of the now prosperous religious colleges was naturally great. Every sort of priesthood or presidency was heaped on him, though only after the death of Lepidus, in B.C. 13, did he allow himself to be *elected* (in his careful observance of old forms) Pontifex Maximus. The supreme religious and political powers were now concentrated in one man's hands. Augustus could, and did, dominate the great religious bodies; supervise their numbers and *personnel*. His power was felt throughout the provinces; political pamphlets of which he disapproved, and religious manifestos which he disliked, were equally suppressed: more than 2000 copies of spurious predictions he caused to be solemnly burnt. Later, the Emperor Trajan (a modest and liberal prince) solves for his commissioner Pliny questions relating directly to the religious scruples even of provincials. Augustus, as a rule, was very careful in this matter. Feasts, however, connected with the Emperor soon developed, not least in the provinces—February 4th, anniversary of his receiving the title *Father of the Fatherland*; July 4th, that of his return from Spain and of the consecration of the great Altar of Peace, etc. A hundred

special celebrations did honour to the birth of the Cæsar's children, his cures from sickness, his political or social or military activities. Nero constantly had sacrifices offered for his sore throats. The name of Augustus was inserted in the oldest litanies; in every public and family feast his health was drunk with words which were half a prayer. Little by little, his house took on the air and decorations of a temple; myths made a halo round his birth and boyhood.

EMPEROR WORSHIP: ITS HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS.—Since this series contains a paper dealing directly and fully with the history of Emperor worship, we shall give no more than in outline the development and effect of this extraordinary phenomenon. Historically, the way was paved for it by the legends which assigned a vague divinity to the old Latin kings—Picus, Faunus, etc.; by the quasi-canonization of the humblest dead—*Dii Manes*, the *Good Gods*, they were called; and by the flattery of the decadent Greek and Asiatic peoples, who did not hesitate to hail Roman governors and generals as Lord and God, having for centuries, by now, so worshipped their chief rulers, even the least worthy. Philosophically, the practice was made possible by the lack of clear-cut distinction, such as we draw, between the nature of God and man. Greeks and Romans recognized as *intermediate* the *theios*, *divus*, "*divine*"; a man was in some peculiar way the vehicle, favourite, representative of God. In life the Divinity more than "hedged" a king; it dwelt in him; and after death he naturally passed into yet closer communion with it. In the case of Julius Cæsar, flattery and vanity were the chief reasons for a quasi-cult. Even in his lifetime his name was given to a month; his statue set among those of the gods: games were celebrated in his

[1] *Ancient King-Worship*, by C. Lattey, S.J., No. XV.

honour, sacrifices offered by special priests. A temple was decreed to Jupiter Julius. Again, let us beware of crediting the Roman with a "theological" mind. He never asked if he was worshipping "Jupiter, *i.e.* Julius," or "Jupiter who is especially interested or active in Julius." Julius was to him a manifestation of Divinity, and he worshipped accordingly. This was especially true when the assassination of Julius raised popular enthusiasm to fever-heat: attempted repression failed altogether. In his own case, Octavius moved prudently. He only allowed temples to be dedicated to him if the *Goddess Rome* were joined in the worship. They rose at first only in the provinces: the fanatic East built them earliest; they creep towards and finally enter Italy, but Rome never. There, however, the old Roman *virtues* (always worshipped, and now held to be at their highest power, so to speak, in the Head of the State) were celebrated with the title *August* added: the *Virtutes Augustae* were a very near approach to the deification of the Augustus. Between the Lares, the guardian spirits of the new city "regions" he mapped out, the statue of his own *Genius* was placed, and venerated with them. After death, "heaven" was "decreed" to him by the senate (Tacitus, *Annals*, i. 73). A special priesthood was founded for him; feasts were multiplied. The cult developed with but few eccentricities. The mad Caligula, no doubt, called himself Brother of Jove. Nero pronounced the apotheosis of his baby daughter and of his wife Poppaea, whom, if the story was true, he killed with a kick. Domitian habitually had himself addressed as Our Lord God. But the bad Emperors, Tiberius, Nero, Domitian, had no apotheosis: a parody was written by Seneca, a mock god-making of poor laughed-at Claudius. In the provinces, however, all social and religious life had for focus the cult of "the Augusti and the City Rome": their temple was the

meeting-place of the provincial councils: their feasts and games were the great popular reunions. The middle class, unable, by birth or means, to hold high offices, found a social dignity open to them in the Confraternities and Sevirate (committee of six) in honour of Augustus. The whole army swore its military oath in his name, and fought under his *auspices* or spiritual presence. How far the Emperors themselves believed in their own divinity it is hard to judge. Vespasian could joke about his: "Bad luck to it," he whispered, when he felt himself dying; "I'm afraid I'm becoming a god." Yet men have believed so much in their "star," "luck," or divine right or "call," that we may certainly consider the Emperors to have honestly regarded themselves as at least God's image, vicegerent, earthly equivalent. This is the view of Horace and of Vergil: "O Father and Guardian of the human race," cries Horace to Jove; "to Thee by destiny is given the care of mighty Cæsar: mayest Thou reign with Cæsar for thy second. . . . Next under Thee shall he rule the world in equity." In the religious life of the period, and even more in the political and social, the cult was of extraordinary importance. The City of Rome, the Army, the Middle Class, the Provincial Governors, all vitally important factors in an Empire, were minutely involved in it. The sanctity which, for a Roman, invested discipline, authority, law, made the cult suitable for the *men* for whom, like most Roman worship, it existed. The Emperor was Rome incarnate: the spirit of the Empire invested him with a divinity which survived the familiarities of the camp and the scandals of the court. To prove your vital union with the Empire, you could do no better than to offer act of homage to his statue: to refuse that homage was to exclude yourself from Rome and from humanity. Hence that homage was chosen as the act by which one might prove, in epitome, one's loyalty. Hence the fury against the Christians who

refused it. The Emperor worship, however, ended by becoming a mere mystical patriotism, considered barely out of keeping with the rather vague state-Christianity initiated by Constantine. With but few ritual omissions, temples were built and games held in honour of Christian Emperors, who were called *divus* as before, and who, for some time, kept the title of Pontifex Maximus. *Cf.* Lect. XV. 25.

LITERARY REVIVAL.—Some other force was necessary from the first to revive the dead spirituality of the Romans. Could literature supply it? Augustus hoped so, and directed his court poets to do their best to rekindle the fallen flame. Genial Horace wrote noble odes on this theme, and, rather perfunctorily, forced a quantity of the old ideals and phraseology—connected with prosperity of crops and family, etc.—into his verses, especially those written for the Secular Games. Even the licentious versifier Ovid wrote the religious *Fasti* (Calendar). "Who could have thought I'd find my way *thence hither*?" he asks in naive astonishment at himself, with a glance to his former poems. But even the Fasti are corrupt: Horace was scarcely a power: Vergil, that "whitest" of souls, as Horace enviously called his friend—"the Maiden," as he was nicknamed by Naples for his purity, did more perhaps, by his passionately and yet gravely beautiful poetry on Italy and Rome (the *Georgics* and *Æneid*), than any man of his time to awaken the religious sense. His ideal, in Æneas, is the *priest*, the giver of gods and worship to the city whose first ancestor he is. All that most touched him, in old and new religious forms, Vergil works into his poem. One eclogue of his was long thought a prophecy of the Virgin-born Messiah. St. Ambrose finds in him (*de s. Spiritu*, ii. 5, 36) proof that pagandom guessed the existence of the Holy Ghost. Constantine proved from him Christ's divinity. His verses are engraved in the Catacombs beside Christ's monogram. The middle

ages wrote hymns and raised statues to him, and introduced him with Old Testament Prophets in religious masques. The marvellous sixth book of the *Æneid*—the descent of Æneas to Hades and his vision there of Rome's future history—is at his highest level, and most instructive for us. For we see in it the increasing influence of foreign doctrines and practices, presaging a mighty change of outlook for the religious Roman. Exotic cults were to invade the country, and respond to the restless religious craving now aroused, and to which the Roman worship, even in this revival, had nothing adequate to give.

II

New Religious Influences

Greece had four qualities of religion—the oldest, most magical, least artistic or dogmatic or anthropomorphic, which never influenced Rome; the official and Olympian, which long ago had Hellenized, as we saw, Roman gods and rituals; the mystic; and the philosophical. The two last were now to influence the masses and the cultivated alike. *Cf.* XI. *passim.*

New Ascetical and Mystical Doctrines.—It was the doctrines of Orpheus and Pythagoras that Vergil worked into his poem; chiefly, no doubt, in connection with the other world. But they presupposed much. Hitherto the whole ideal had been a prosperous life, on good terms with the gods here on the earth. Religious duty had practically meant the right performance of ritual. The new philosophies taught not only the ideas of *sin*, purity of *conscience*—symbolized, no doubt, by much exterior ritual, repentance, and indeed penance; but that the chief and enduring results of all this came after death, *thus setting the whole of human life to revolve round a new axis.* Incurable sinfulness meant eternal, unthinkable torture; lesser degrees of impurity involved,

in one shape or another, a process of painful purification, till, in the end, perfect and eternal happiness is attained. And in all manner of ways—some noble (as by chastity), some neutral (as by fasting from flesh meat), some ignoble (as by venal "absolutions," hawked by itinerant priests in favour of individuals or whole towns, of past sins or future)—this *post-mortem* punishment might be mitigated.

FOREIGN CULTS AT ROME.—It would be hopeless to try even to outline the various foreign cults which now ran riot at Rome. "*Dignus Roma locus quo deus omnis eat*," says Ovid. "Rome is a fit goal for any and every god." But they agree on the following points: the inculcation of the sense of sin, and the necessity of purification—usually by way of physical penance; the immediate bearing of this on the future life; a wholly un-Roman emotionalism; an immense preponderance of the *feminine* element among their adepts; the rise of a priestly *caste*, men set apart to preach their special deity, and to act in all things as necessary mediator between God and worshipper.

Rome had hated such foreign cults. If she adopted the gods of conquered races, she had Romanized them in ritual and often in name. Even so, their shrines were not allowed at first within the city walls. In 186 B.C. the Senate ruthlessly crushed the nocturnal orgies celebrated by the drunken worshippers of the Greek wine-god Bacchus. Even when, some years before, the Asiatic goddess, the *Great Mother*, was brought in pomp to Rome, in consequence of a vow, and a temple and games were given her on the Palatine in thanks for the victories she had granted the Roman arms, yet no citizen might share in these rites and games, which were to be carried out entirely by Phrygians. But the foreigners had never been wholly absent, and now arrived in irresistible force.[1]

[1] This series includes a special paper on the worship of *Mithra*, No. XVI., which will therefore not be touched on here.

ISIS.—From Egypt came the religion of Isis. Only in the shape which influenced Imperial Rome need we describe it, and will not touch on its origin and development. It contained features to please all characters. The lower classes, and all who loved emotion, found in it the November ceremony of passionate grief, followed by wild, enthusiastic joy—the commemoration of the violent death of Osiris; the search for him by his sorrowing sister-wife Isis; his joyous finding, and his exaltation to be judge of all the dead in Hades, until with him all pure souls should be at last identified, and become themselves Osiris. This dramatic worship of Osiris, who was recognized by contemporaries as being in origin a grain god—as indeed all these young Eastern gods, whom we shall see dying yearly and restored to life, were held (almost wholly rightly) to be—was ridiculed by pagans (Ovid and Juvenal, etc.), as well as by Christians (Tertullian, etc.); but the frenzied grief and glee of the people never flagged. In the spring, too, the holy boat of Isis, gorgeously adorned and solemnly blessed, was set to sail upon the seas to initiate the year's navigation. A regular carnival of masked worshippers attended the religious procession of white-robed initiates, women and tonsured men, bearing flowers and candles round statues, and symbols of Isis and Osiris. A priest walked last with Nile water in a sacred vessel, which he raised to bless the people. Flutes and sacred rattles (*sistra*) accompanied long litanies to Isis. Twice daily a solemn service was offered in her temples. At the early morning sacrifice her image was unveiled; at two in the afternoon the blessing of Nile water was given and hymns were chanted by the devout. *Cf.* VIII. 7, 15–17; Append.

In her other character, as mother of the divine child Horus, she was especially attractive to women, who flocked to her shrines, and in whom superstition found its best subjects. Especially frequent was the

practice of sleeping in her temples, to obtain dreams or special communications from the goddess. This gave rise to untold abuses: the shrines became mere places for assignations. Juvenal furiously calls the goddess the Isiac procuress. For philosopher, however, and ascetic, the cult was irresistible.

We cannot here detail the really sublime or spiritual meditations on the nature of Isis and Osiris (by Plutarch, etc.); we shall outline the history of one of the goddess' special devotees—for here again a new notion is introduced to Rome, the total setting aside of ordinary social and political life for one of religious abstinence. Our best information is in Appuleius' *Metamorphoses*. There we see a young candidate offer himself for initiation to the head of one of Isis' temples in thanksgiving for a miracle worked by her in his favour. His eagerness to take the vows is checked by the old priest. Lucius fasts, prays, and waits in the temple precincts. At last the day is revealed in vision. Lucius is plunged in a holy font, prays yet longer, passes ten days in solitude and silence. On the last night, a mystical drama (representing, probably, the history of Isis, Osiris, and the soul) is enacted before him, exciting him to the highest pitch of religious ecstasy. Words fail the neophyte to describe the mystic death and return to life which he experiences. Next day, clothed in the garb of "religion," which, now that he has entered upon this "holy warfare," he will wear till death and even in his tomb, he is revealed to the populace standing at the foot of the statue of Isis, adorned with sacred vestments—her devotee, in chastity and obedience, for life. Words cannot express the sublimity of emotion which is reached in the prayers and meditations of Lucius. With extremely few (though all-important) changes, they would stand as worthy of a modern client of Our Lady. If ever religion, other than Christianity, seemed likely to have the power to become universal

and permanent, condescending, yet sublime, it was that of Isis, the mother, the maiden, sorrowful, powerful, merciful, tender; in no other form of pagan worship we read of is the *personal* feeling, the filial affection, so amazing as it is here. Yet, as everyone knows, a more obscene book than that of Appuleius hardly anywhere exists; though Tertullian held up the chastity of the real initiates and priests of Isis as a model to Christians, in the main the religion could do nothing for the bulk of its worshippers, and indeed ran riot into licentious superstition. Very soon the flames sank on the altars which from "Sahara to the Atlantic," in barbarian German forests, in Holland, in York, had kept men and women of all ranks and characters on their knees before the goddess Isis.[1]

BELLONA.—The other foreign cults had all the sordid, and few of the noble, features of the Isiac. The Cappadocian goddess Mâ, assimilated to the Mazdean Anâhita and the Italian war-goddess Bellona, was worshipped by bands of self-styled "fanatics," robed in black, with high caps. Twisting like dervishes, they shrieked through the streets with drums and trumpets, hacking their arms and shoulders with knives, drinking their own blood and sprinkling the passers-by. They prophesied the future, and the hysterical crowd rained money and even food upon them.

DEA SYRA.—The *Dea Syra*, or Syrian goddess worshipped especially at Byblus—the *Astarte* of the Old Testament—had but a less vogue in the Roman Empire. Her great devotee was Nero, who scorned all other cults, in theory, save his own. She, too, was connected with a yearly dying and rising god, Adonis, whose violent death, rising, and "sending up into the

[1] The Isiac *philosophy* was, moreover, practically Neoplatonist, and rested on the premisses of a pessimistic dualism. Its *asceticism* was normally and in essence *magical*; and the non-historicity of the person of Isis vitiated the reality of its *worship*.

sky" were noisily celebrated each spring. In the Greek world this goddess was identified with Aphrodite. At Byblus, her priest stood for seven days, sleepless, on a pillar thirty cubits high. Thousands of pilgrims made money offerings to her; another priest told the first their names, and he prayed for each. On their journey the pilgrims slept always on the ground, drank only water, and shaved their heads and eyebrows. SABAZIUS was the supreme Phrygian god, whose name had been audaciously recognized, by his worshippers, in the Greek *Sabaoth*, the Septuagint rendering of the Jewish divine title, God of *Armies*. There is little doubt that Semitic influences modified the old Asiatic cult: the votive hands, which, with the three first fingers extended in ritual act of benediction, were constantly put up by the worshippers of Sabazius, are quite possibly derived from Jewish sources; so too, it may be, their belief in a good angel, their *post-mortem* guide to that banquet of eternal felicity which their earthly ritual repasts prefigured. Almost certainly, too, the title Hypsistos, under which the innumerable Jewish colonies, especially in Asia Minor, appear to have worshipped the Most High God, will have come thence to attach itself to Attis (see *infra*). Similarly, in magical papyri, the name Iao (Yahweh, Jehovah), and those of the Angels, have come to find a place beside those of Egyptian or Greek divinities, invoked by pagans, who, to be on the safe side, thought it best to invoke or compel divine assistance by every name or title of which they knew. *Cf.* VII. 10, 12, 22.

Men, and others, formed part of this invasion, but none was so popular as the Great Mother, Cybele, from Phrygia. Her cult was, paradoxically, authorized by the conservative Emperor Claudius, who instituted her yearly feast from the 15th to 27th of March. His predecessor Caligula had officially recognized Isis, and the flood could not now be resisted.

Cybele, too, is connected with a fertility-god, the beautiful young Attis, whose symbol, the Pine-tree, was carried by the college of Dendrophori (*Tree-carriers*) to his temple on March 23rd. All March 24th, which was called the Day of Blood, devotees mourned round this image of the dead god: blood-libations were poured out to him; neophytes, by hysterical mutilation, made to him the supreme sacrifice of their manhood. During the night they were held to be identified with the god Attis and mystically united to the goddess. Next day was the festival of Exultation: the god rose from his sleep of death; the maddest orgies succeeded to penance no less mad. The 26th of March was, reasonably enough, called *Requietio*, Rest-day; on the 27th, a splendid procession throughout the city closed the festival.

Not only on these festivals, but daily in some part or other, the processions of Oriental begging priests, dressed in white and violet, with saffron shoes, were seen. They bore a shrine veiled with crimson silk curtains, which, swinging apart, revealed the sacred image. When popular enthusiasm was slow to appear, a priest would wildly confess some supposed sin, strip, and scourge himself to blood. Then the frightened crowd heaped presents on him. Appuleius has left us a hideous picture of their ensuing revels.[1] The rite of the *Taurobolium* came to be closely connected with Cybele. The goddess would declare that certain individuals, or a community, or town, needed purification; or men, conscious of guilt, might offer themselves for this rite. A platform would be raised, pierced like a sieve; the suppliant would stand beneath it; bulls would be led on to it, and their arteries severed over the sieve-like holes. The blood poured in streams over the devotee, who rubbed it into every

[1] Appuleius' rather confused account strictly applies to the cult of *Dea Syra*. But Cybele's cult absorbed most Oriental worships; anyhow, its spirit is identical.

part of his body—his very hair and eyes, and would even swallow it. He issued forth scarlet, and, as Prudentius says, "horrible to see"—*renatus in aeternum*, "reborn for eternity"; so the formula ran. The first example of this sacrifice is found at Naples in 133 A.D., under Hadrian: all over the Empire it spread. When Christianity became a formidable rival, the pagans accused the Church of having *imitated* the rite in her doctrines of baptismal regeneration and remission of sins by blood: modern controversialists have not been lacking to support a similar thesis.

REFLECTIONS BASED ON THESE CULTS. — With regard to this point we may say directly, that in the matter of ritual the Church may legitimately assume any practice which is natural to all humanity—such as prostration in prayer, or the use of water to symbolize the purification of the conscience from sin; or may even take over from paganism any practice from which she can extract what is good and leave what is bad, like the *Robigalia* processions mentioned in Lect. XIII. p. 5, or the Isiac tonsure, or even formulæ or titles; exactly as the healthy digestion can reject what is bad in the food it is given, and assimilate what is good. No Catholic has ever denied what is, after all, only a proof of the admirably healthy organism of the Church. All that Catholics do deny, is that the doctrines which the Church claims to have had peculiarly revealed to her have ever had their origin in, or been essentially modified by, alien ritual or beliefs. In the case of the Taurobolium, M. Cumont, than whom no higher authority can be found, will not admit, as in any way demonstrated, that even the Christian phraseology was at all modified by it. The reverse is true. "Directly Christianity became a moral power in the world, it imposed itself even on its enemies. The Phrygian priests of the Great Mother opposed their feasts of the spring equinox to the Christian Easter, and attributed to the blood spilt in

the Taurobolium the redeeming power of the Blood of the Lamb."[1] Christian Fathers were aware of this audacious comparison and bitterly resented it. But even in ritual matters, it is loose language that often makes us take a superficial resemblance for an essential connection. "One can talk," says M. Cumont again, "of 'Isiac Vespers,' or a 'Holy Supper of Mithra and his companions,' but only as one says, 'the vassal princes of the (Roman) Empire,' or the 'socialism' of Diocletian. It is a trick of style intended to bring out a similarity, and vividly to establish an approximate parallel. But an epigram is not a proof, and one must not be in a hurry to conclude from an *analogy* to an *influence*" (*ibid.* p. xii.). Mr. J. M. Robertson is an erudite compiler who not only uses such language freely, but treats the similarities he thus creates as proof of essential relationship. "For such purposes," writes Mr. Rhys Davids, an undisputed authority, "comparisons are no longer of any service; and they will be of worse than no service if we imagine that likeness is any proof of direct relationship; that similarity of ideas in different countries shows that either the one or the other was necessarily a borrower." "It is as illogical to argue," he concludes, "that *coincidence* of beliefs implies a causal connection between them, as to suppose that chalk cliffs in China are produced by chalk cliffs in the Downs of Sussex" (*Hibbert Lectures*, 1881, p. 3). All this applies most directly to the similarities apparent in these Eastern notions of the death and resurrection of a God, of the universal motherhood of Isis, of the need of penance for the remission of sin, to Christian tenets and practices. Partly, as we said, the similarities are exaggerated; partly they were worked up by pagans themselves; partly they testify to a similar need in the heart of man at all times and in all

[1] *Religions Orientales*, etc., pp. xii, 87; cf. *Textes et Monuments*, etc., i. 341.

places; and in any case they are utterly eclipsed by the infinite *difference* between the pagan data and that in Christianity round which these similarities group themselves—*i.e.* the person and the power of Christ. "If the categories under which Christ is interpreted are borrowed, which is certainly not proved," writes Mr. Sweet,[1] "Christ Himself is not borrowed. The assertion that Christianity is a plagiarized and masquerading heathenism is absurd in view of the fact that at precisely the vital point—the character of the personality upon whom the claim of authority depends—Christianity is conceded to be without a measurably successful competitor among heathen faiths. . . . Christ is Christianity's challenge to the world."

We have purposely quoted these non-Catholic authorities to show that we need not even be Catholics to see how utterly wide of the mark is, *e.g.*, the assertion[2] of so great an Egyptologist as Professor Petrie, that our cult of Mary is merely that of Isis, taken over from Egypt under another name. Far more truly might we say that our practice of eating bread is *taken over* from the Egyptian practice of eating *ta*, since bread is only *ta* "under another name." We feel hungry independently of the Egyptians, and eat what we can get. Our soul hungers after the ideal of pure and merciful and august motherhood, sympathetic with our sorrows, no less than did the Egyptians'. Their soul-hunger evolved and was satisfied with Isis, an ideal vague enough to admit characteristics not only of much sublimity, but also of much grossness, and a worship directly tending, in the bulk of its devotees, to superstition, venality, and often licence. Our soul-hunger has had given to it the person of Mary, in which historical reality is united with an ideal transcending everything that the human brain had conceived or human heart desired. She is

[1] *Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*, p. 156.
[2] Twice made in his *Religion of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 44 and 92.

to Isis as true bread is to the moss with which the starving Icelander deludes his famished stomach. From this phase, therefore, of Roman Religion we are convinced, first, of the passionate desire of the human heart for God; second, of the inability of every religious system, save Christianity, to satisfy it. A Catholic touches here, as with his finger, the infinite difference between his Faith and the alien beliefs. To be unaware of that difference argues, in the class of writers we have alluded to, ignorance, not indeed of those pagan faiths they have so closely and valuably studied, but of the Catholic Religion, of which they have had no personal experience, and have often omitted to examine.

III

Religious Philosophy

We have not here, as in our last paper, been able to indicate any equable laws of religious development and decline. In prolific chaos, the most contradictory systems flourished side by side to the end. We shall, however, be able to point out one principle of unification afterwards energetic.

Religious Philosophy: Stoicism.—First, however, we must notice the religionizing of philosophy. Of all the Greek systems taken over by Rome, Stoicism had triumphed. Throughout the glories of the Augustan age, we trace a vein of pessimism. In proportion as the splendour of the Empire and the autocracy of the Emperor grew, luxury and idleness perforce increased on all sides. Laws on marriage and extravagance proved futile to check the first; educated men turned to philosophy and study to avoid the second. Only the philosophies of Pleasure or of Renunciation seemed suitable to the circumstances. Too practical, or already too languid to philosophize

about their pleasures, the Romans who turned their thoughts inwards necessarily found in the stern Stoic doctrines of detachment and self-sufficiency a congenial mental pabulum. In proportion as the Empire developed its lusts and cruelties, the relics of unreal metaphysical disputations vanished: the last ghastly years of Tiberius and the insane reign of Nero made of philosophy entirely a "*school of life*," a practical affair in which one learnt to live unspotted and to die bravely, and which taught that consolation, when needed, was to be sought elsewhere than in this world, in the thought of God, that is, and the hope of Immortality.

a. SENECA.—We omit, therefore, all the relatively uninfluential figures — Papirius, etc. — previous to Seneca, the tutor of Nero's youth, the recluse of his later reign, the obedient suicide of 65 A.D., and the writer of works and letters so "spiritual" as to have led men to believe, falsely, in his conversion to Christianity, and even to forge a correspondence between him and St. Paul. His personal life was scarcely convincing: he preached detachment on a fortune of 300,000,000 sesterces; his splendid country-house reminds one of Mr. Godley's Horace, whose ideal was merely "a little cottage in a lane—Park Lane, for choice." His writings were described by the sarcastic Emperor Caligula as "sand without lime"; his death showed mingled timidity, tenacity, and search for effect. Yet in all his work there is an under-current of conviction, and indeed of fervour, which wins for him our sincere sympathy and even admiration. He may profitably be compared with Fénelon.

In Seneca two men fought for mastery—the philosopher and the devotee. As Stoic philosopher, his notion of God was that of the world-soul, the infinite universal Spirit which pervaded the whole; God was a Force, or Nature. The soul, too, in Stoic theory, and in Seneca's, when he theorized, was material: immortality, therefore, is often by him and them

denied. But above this is a quite different and indeed contradictory doctrine—not alone, though especially, in his later works—a doctrine, in fact, which predominates exactly in proportion to his progressive abandonment of abstract theory for what is of practical utility. God becomes a Father; a Creator who loves us with an energetic love; a Friend never distant; our Inspiration; the tenant of our souls. Hence our attitude to Him must be one of worship and love. The love of God here enters for the first time into the practical and *habitual* philosophy of life such as Rome had known it. In consequence, the life of earth is but one long warfare. He uses the words almost of St. Paul. "Let us conquer utterly," he cries. "*Our* prize is no mere wreath or palm. Moreover, the gods are all on our side: they are not proud; to those fain to ascend they reach out their hand." Indeed, God gives the impulse to ascend: "From Him come our great and potent resolutions." If we really think the gods do not care for us, we "must be blind to all the hands uplifted to them from every corner of the earth, and deaf to the world's great chorus of prayer." In this effort, we fight side by side with our fellow-men: "man to his fellow-man is sacred." There is no exception: "slaves are our humbler friends." And after our long discipline of abstinence and detachment of heart, the soul leaves the body as a prison, a tomb; and the "day of death, which thou fearest as thy last, is really that of thine eternal birthday."

His Deficiencies.—Yet in all this Seneca does not much transcend his predecessors, save in a certain glow of superior conviction. He regarded his presentment of a loving Father-God as an anthropomorphic condescension; the *sapiens*, the self-sufficient *Wise Man*, was his ideal, though for weaker characters he had a scaled perfection and a prudent casuistry to offer. The Wise Man was invincible; he was the

consummation, in aloofness, of Self. He lived "on an equality with the gods." He was their "comrade, not their suppliant." God "transcends not the Wise Man in felicity, though in His antiquity He overpasseth him." There were in Seneca, in spite of everything, permanent elements of independence, coldness, even cynicism and doubt, which define his emotion-tinged philosophy as still human; still no more than striving after, still not quite ready for the soul which Christianity puts into every natural system. The superstition or arid scepticism, prevalent later, was the goal to which he tended. From Thomas à Kempis he stands "worlds away."

β. POPULAR APOSTOLATE.—Seneca's influence was, on the whole, that of the spiritual director of a special *clientèle*, or rather set, than that of a missionary-apostle, though these comparisons may be pushed too far. But it is certain that about this time Religio-Philosophy became extraordinarily popular, and was henceforward loudly preached throughout the Empire. All "sects" proclaimed their doctrines; but chiefly did the ascetic Stoic and the mystic Pythagorean become popular. Both agreed in relentless denunciation of the prevalent luxury, and in exaltation of personal abstinence, coupled with social reverence for one's fellow-men. Apollonius of Tyana (who was born about the Christian era and died in extreme old age) studied philosophy in Greece and mystic theology among the Brahmans in India. Returning to Europe, he everywhere restored lapsed ceremonies; lectured on philosophy; preached to the people from temple steps and in theatres; denounced popular vices; reformed profligates; united city factions, and composed religious treatises. At Rome he lived in the temples; created a popular revival; was persecuted by Nero and Domitian. Long afterwards, Philostratus wrote his life. Myths and miracles, based sometimes on the Gospels, clustered round him and caused him to be set up as

a rival Christ. Musonius (a contemporary) preached only, without writing; he panegyrized chastity, and "set men's consciences bare before their eyes." With singular lack of judgement he tried to discourse on the beauty of Peace to the soldiery of Vespasian and Vitellius, engaged in civil war at the gates of Rome. Maximus of Tyre, somewhat later, displayed the qualities of a fervent broad-churchman, and composed edifying discourses compact of rather academic theology and genuine philanthropy and virtuous aspiration. Dion Chrysostom, however (died 117), journeyed in beggar's dress, surrounded by crowds of eager disciples, who plied him with questions on points of morality rather than religion. In his very rhetorical harangues he anathematizes, without the slightest respect of persons, the favourite vices of the notabilities or cities with whom he found himself involved. All these men were genuinely appalled at the crying necessity of human-kind, the helplessness of man both to *know* and to *will*. "They are like children," Dion beautifully says, "who are bereft of father and mother, and oftentimes in their dreams stretch out their hands to them, but they are not there."[1] Stripped of its local colouring and personal allusions, practically all this mass of missionary preaching is reducible to the simplest conceptions common to all high thinking of every age; the existence, the purity, the providence of God; the littleness, the dependence, the wickedness of man; the all-importance of the moral life. The differences centre chiefly round the greater or less insistence on ascetical abstinence.

CHARLATAN PHILOSOPHERS. — Most of these men, however, suffered from the deplorably bad character of their imitators. The ordinary man of the world, such as Lucian (born about 120 A.D.), confounded these nobler characters with the troops of charlatan philosophers who, attracting attention by

[1] *Or.* xii., § 61.

their austerities, gained popular attention and even amassed a fortune, on which they retired. Frequently, too, their public mortifications masked private libertinism, and they were constantly banished from Rome. Such were the Cynics, with whom Lucian has no patience, and who are denounced by the more reputable members of their own sect, such as Dion. They were all that caricaturists have made of the mendicant friars, of whom they were indeed the significant pagan counterpart. And yet, Demônax, one of their leaders, attained universal respect and indeed love: children called him father; it was an honour if he invited himself to dine at your house; men rose from their seats as he passed; long after his death his stone bench was kept garlanded as sacred. St. Augustine (*City of God*, xiv. 20) will not allow the Cynics of his day to be calumniated. The Cynic Peregrînus had been a Christian; the orator Aristîdes finds much similarity between Cynics and the "impious folk in Palestine." Maximus, an Egyptian of the fourth century, continued to dress as a Cynic till he was actually installed as bishop of Constantinople. St. John Chrysostom sings the praises of contemporary Cynicism. In short, there can be no doubt at all that, during the first two centuries of our era, alongside of the great invasion of Asiatic, Syrian, and Egyptian cults, with their emotional appeal to conscience, the sense of sin, the value of purity and penance, came a tremendous moral revival, active in every class of society from the imperial palace to the mob in the market-place. And while the Eastern cults carried emotional mysticism to the sublimest pitch it well may reach, and the new religious philosophy scaled heights which have led men to see in it a rival of the doctrine of the gospels and of the *Imitation of Christ*, yet it is true that nothing prevented the one from running out into general licence of manners, and the other into an appalling intellectual superstition.

IV

Superstition and Piety

Superstition.—Superstition was never altogether absent, whether in Augustus' days—he begged at his door one day yearly to avert ill-luck attendant on too great prosperity—or in Nero's day, or Domitian's, when women dipped thrice in frozen Tiber, "expiating a whole year at a time," or crawled with torn knees over the stones of the Campus Martius; or when unbelieving Tiberius kept his private soothsayer ever at his side; yet in the second Christian century it reached, perhaps, its apogee. The astrology and magic and fairy-tales of the East excited men's imagination as never before. Edict after edict had banished the Astrologers; they always returned. At last graver and learned men took up the cudgels on behalf of the most fantastic imaginings.

Aristîdes. — Aristîdes (born 117 A.D. in Mysia) stands as symbol of a whole tendency of miracle-seeking. Broken in health by the excitement of a rhetorician's life, he spent thirteen years seeking for a cure from various shrines. Especially were Asklepios and Isis the givers of health: their temples were ubiquitous: in them men slept, were visited in dreams by the god, had revealed to them their remedy, or at times were cured outright. The shrines of Asklepios were indeed regular sanatoriums, where a long stay in absolute quiet, exquisite air and scenery, on strict *régime* of food and exercise, was possible. Thousands of ex-votos, in gratitude for benefits, have been excavated in his temples. Aristîdes gives an appalling list of his diseases (nervous as they doubtless were, they yet could thrust his chest-bones outward, and crook his back like a bow; his limbs shook constantly; and he suffered from a gigantic tumour),

and a yet more appalling list of divinely counselled remedies. Purged and blood-let as never were our ancestors, he yet was often bidden to bathe, when in a high fever, in an ice-cold, flooded river, and then run a mile at full speed against a north wind. His horrified doctors and friends would race after him, but he was only the better for his religious obedience. Sometimes his story takes on an air of wild farce. Once he dreamt that all his bones and sinews must be removed : luckily a clever interpreter assured him that this merely meant he would be cured, which indeed happened abruptly and completely ! With equal proportions of naive vanity and genuine gratitude he wrote his history in the *Sacred Orations*. We can do no more than mention two further types of what superstition could then produce. ARTEMIDORUS of Daldis (died about 200) compiled with infinite pains five books of dreams and their interpretation. He collected every known treatise on the subject, and visited every authority. No possible interest save that of the grotesque attaches to this "pseudo-science." With inconceivable fertility of imagination or minuteness of observation, he collects dreams, from the most sublime to the most disgusting, and from the most absurd to the most dull, and, distinguishing carefully between *dreamers* and *occasions*, etc., etc., assigns their nearly always trivial meaning. I retract: the book is horribly suggestive of what men's waking state of mind must have been, when educated persons could habitually dream dreams like these. About the same time flourished the impostor ALEXANDER of Abonoteichos, of disreputable antecedents. With the help of a huge snake with fangs extracted, on which he put a linen human mask with mouth that worked by horse-hairs, he established an oracle-shrine which threw the whole Empire into confusion. A clever ventriloquist, he would make the snake seem to answer questions ; he would also answer written and sealed letters appar-

ently without opening them. He had an army of spies throughout Europe; information flowed into the shrine, and counsels, often of Imperial importance, issued forth. High officials, great families, were disastrously involved in his toils. One old senator of sixty was mad enough to marry Alexander's daughter —by the Moon. He initiated a persecution of the "atheist" Epicureans, and, simultaneously, of the hostile Christian communities. Lucian minutely describes his own exposure of the frauds and consequent risk. The oracle survived only to perish miserably later on.

COUNTRY CONSERVATISM.—All this time, in the quiet country places of Italy, the old local cults continued. We find our best records of this in the inscriptions, etc., connected with popular guilds and associations. Constantly forbidden at Rome, as productive of exactly the political complications which we associate with Trade Unions, these guilds none the less multiplied and became powerful. In the country places they were almost purely burial clubs, formed among the slaves of the big houses and estates. Elsewhere they were connected with every sort of trade or profession—raftsmen, wool, wood, and cheap cloth-merchants, confectioners, washerwomen. And all had their patrons, celestial no less than earthly, or worshipped at least their *Genius*. Members loved their chapel, and contributed to it gifts, if not in money, at least in kind—tiles, oil for the lamp, the picture of the divine Patron.[1] Religion, however, sat lightly on the members, and was coupled with natural pleasures. Common worship would be followed by a common feast; a pilgrimage to some famous shrine would take the form of a pleasant excursion. It was into the funeral and burial guilds that religion, as we suggested, entered most,

[1] The *Collection of Latin Inscriptions*, iii. 633, gives a pathetic little list of humble gifts to a very poor chapel.

and here the records are as touching as they are numerous.

COURT PIETY AND PHILOSOPHY.—At the other extreme of society the Antonine Emperors, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (ruled 138–180), set an example of very remarkable piety and wise philanthropy. The whole tone of their correspondence is as different as possible from Cicero's. It is full of habitual and natural references to prayer and trust in Providence. "Every morning," says Aurelius (*ad. M. Caes.*, v. 25), "I pray for Faustina" (his wife); and again, "My mother's illness leaves me not a moment's rest; and now Faustina's confinement is approaching. Well, we must trust in the gods." The religious colouring of philosophy reached its brightest in the works of Epictetus (died under Hadrian) and of Marcus Aurelius, his spiritual descendant. Everyone knows the splendid cry of Epictetus—"What can I do, I, a lame old man, save sing God's praise and call on all men to join me in my song?" For Aurelius the universe was one perfect harmony, above all things to be loved: the old Greek poets could passionately love Athens: "Canst not *thou* say," he asks himself, "dear City of Zeus?" For to him the universe was God's abode, and, indeed, was God. But confess we must, that these noble outbursts were but few in the long writings of Stoic submission—a "stunned acquiescence" in Nature and Universal Law, rather than the "enthusiastic acceptance" (visible in, say, Thomas à Kempis) of a Master personally known and loved and followed. The soul which was ultimately to be reabsorbed into the whole could not do better than annihilate, in so far as might be, its selfhood at the outset. But both state and private *charities* now become a regular institution, and are significant of the awakening social sense of the Antonine age.

V

The Final Phase

The Severi.—From 194–235 the Severi held power, and under them religion underwent the last modification introduced from foreign influences. Already the millions of Syrian slaves, and the constant commercial connection with Syria, had familiarized the Roman world with Syrian cults. But the family connections now set up with the Princesses Julia, Domna, Maesa, Soaemis, and Mamaea, all Syrians, ladies who achieved an amazing social and even political power in this century, did more than anything to Syrianize popular worship. Of Atargatis, the "Syrian goddess," we have already spoken. The various local Baals ("lords"), all baptized Jupiter by the Romans, with their local appellation added, followed her. That of Damascus was early famous. Antoninus Pius had already restored the temple of him of Baal-bek into one of the wonders of the world. Owing to the number of recruits from Commagene, "Jupiter Dolichenus," the Baal of a little town there, too insignificant for a single author to mention, is shown by inscriptions to have been one of the most popular foreign importations. The attempt of that monstrosity of mad vice, Elagabalus, from his infancy priest of the Baal of Emesa, to impose on the Empire the paramount worship of his patron the Unconquered Sun Elagabalus, with its attendant ceremonies of ritual debauchery and even human sacrifice (since these obtained widely in Syria), created such a violent revolt against the promiscuous Syrian cults, that practically nothing survived of them save the all-important solar worship, which now bade fair to become universal. Everywhere cosmopolitan conditions, the break-up of all old barriers, were issuing in a philosophy by no means

esoteric, which proclaimed the worship of One God under an infinite variety of forms. Every nation, every age, gave Him names and worship suitable to its genius. No religion was therefore untrue, no ritual meaningless. The priest of Isis could be priest too of Cybele. The initiate of Mithra might learn the mysteries of Eleusis. Alexander Severus placed the statues of Christ and Abraham between those of Orpheus and the Lares in his private oratory. And under the figure of the Sun—unique giver of all life, immortal, all-seeing—this god was worshipped. Ever since Plato the Sun had been associated, as its symbol, with the most sublime philosophical conception of the Absolute; everywhere in the East, especially in those immense plains of Egypt and Babylon, where the wide view of heaven provoked astrology, the Sun had held chief place. Under Aurelian (A.D. 290–295) the *Sol Invictus* triumphed. A gigantic temple, with college of priests and four-yearly games, was reared to him. Macrobius and others develop the philosophical *rationale* of the immense popular synthesis. The whole of the reaction under Julian the Apostate (successor of Constantius) gathered round the supreme cult of the Unconquered Sun. The winter solstice, December 25th, is celebrated as his birthday. The Christians fix on that day the birth-feast of the Sun of Righteousness. The Fathers argue against the connection set up by heretics, as by pagans, between the material Sun and Christ; even in St. Leo's time, converted Romans were found who, on entering the Basilica of St. Peter and Paul at Mass, turned to adore the rising Sun. In the popular superstitious worship of Armenia, traces of these extraordinary phenomena are still left. And throughout, with amazing lapses into puerility and obscenity, Neoplatonist philosophers are elaborating the doctrine of the One God, infinitely removed from intellect as from sense, to be met by the purified soul in ecstasy alone, and revealed

to the multitude, and to others of lower spiritual life in the orb of day.

. . . . . .

CONCLUSION.—We shall be far indeed from scorning or reviling the impulse which gave rise to any of these forms of worship. They prove two things: the passionate outstretch of the soul after God, and the helplessness of human nature, left to itself, to attain Him. They prove that man wanted a God, one, supreme, powerful, loving, just: a God, too, who was revealed; who knew death and suffering, but who triumphed over death; who communicated His Nature in some inexplicably intimate way to the hungry soul. They prove that man knew he was sinful and needed penance of his own, and redemption from his God, and purification even beyond the grave as he journeyed to the final joy. They prove that Virginity, that Motherhood, Sacraments, Priesthood, are essentially congenial to the human heart and mind. Amid the maddest aberrations of lust and cruelty, scarcely less than in the sublimest philosophies and asceticism, the soul's effort is discernible. "*Tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore*," says Vergil, in an exquisite line, of the souls not yet at peace in death; "they were stretching out their hands in longing for the further shore." Centuries ago, Plato himself had seen that the most poor Humanity could do was to cast itself into the troubled waters of life, clinging to what spars of chance, hope, or guess, or myth, or rite it might hap upon, until the day when it should win to the other side, "on the surer bark of some divine doctrine." That divine doctrine, and, above all, a new divine strength, came in Christ, born at Bethlehem, dying upon Calvary, risen, and living in His Church. Men now have what they always wanted, always tried to get, and never won, though at times success appeared so imminent.

"Paganism," says St. Augustine (*Conf.*, vii. 21), "*saw*, at least, the road from its hill-top." "Believe me," cries the Christian poet Prudentius (*c. Symm.*, ii. 620), "even in those days the road was prepared for Christ upon His way." Man had, for the first time perhaps in history, become fully conscious of his needs and of his helplessness. Hence that fertile crop of novelties in religion; hence that under-current of despair in those who had gone highest. Hence, too, a recognition, possible to us better than to our predecessors, of how amazingly Christianity suits the human nature it has come to transform and lift up to divinity. Man was prepared for it, and it for man. The completest man is the Christian.

We conclude, then, this study at the moment of the full rising of the Christian sun upon Europe. So far its sane and steady light has grown in the Roman world like that of dawn across gaudy and fantastic fireworks, or like waking reason across a fitful, nightmare-haunted sleep. A study of that Early Christian Faith lies beyond our scope: it is treated in a special paper entitled *Religion of the Early Church*, by the Rev. C. Lattey, Lect. XIX.

APPENDIX

We are glad to add some expressions of Seneca, striking alike in their scope and in their limitations. *Cf.* pp. 19–21.

"The wise man will succour another in his grief, but not yield himself thereto. He will give his hand to the drowning, his house to the exile, alms to the needy, but not the insulting alms that most men toss, when fain to appear charitable, to those whom they loathe, even while they help them, and from whose touch they shrink. No, he will give as one man to another from the common store. He will render her son to his weeping mother—strike off his chains, if a slave; take him from the arena, if a gladiator; and cause the body even of a criminal to be buried. [But in all this, Seneca continues, he must yield to no interior emotions . . .]." *On Mercy*, ii. 6.

"The good man cannot but feel anger against the wicked. . . . Yet has he no ground to hate a sinner. It is error that has

driven him into his faults. Now no prudent man can hate the erring, else he must hate himself! And, indeed, he *will* be angered with himself; for no just judge pronounces divergent sentences in his own, and in another's cause. No one, I say, is to be found, who can absolve himself. Who calls himself innocent, may be listening to a witness, but not to his conscience! How worthier, then, of a man, to have a gentle and peaceable heart for sinners; not to persecute them, but to lead them back. . . . *Ah, when will you learn to love?*" *On Mercy*, i. 14, iii. 28.

And, discussing the nature of Comets, and the divine plan in the Universe, he writes: "Well has Aristotle said, we should never be humbler than when speaking of the gods. If we compose ourselves on entering a temple, cast down our eyes at the sacrifice, draw to us our toga, and strive to express in all our demeanour the most perfect modesty, how much more is this our duty, when we are discussing the heavenly bodies, the stars, and the nature of the gods. . . . How many an orb, besides these we see, travels through hidden space, and never rises upon human! gaze Not all things has God revealed to our sight. Indeed, how tiny a part of His huge work is entrusted to our view! He Himself who wields them, who created this whole, who founded it, and girt it about Him, He who is Himself the greatest and best in all His work, eludes our eye, and may be contemplated in thought alone. What is akin to the supreme Deity, is mystery . . . it fills our eyes, and yet escapes them. In too holy a shrine that immense Majesty lies hidden, and there rules its kingdom, that is, Itself, and gives access to none, save the Soul. What That is, without which nought is, we cannot tell. . . . Then how many new facts of life has our own age first discovered! Well, and there is much we know not, that the people yet to come shall know—things reserved for many a century yet to be, when all memory of ourselves shall quite have disappeared."—*Scientific Investigations*, vii. 30. This is the broad-mindedness of genuine humility.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

G. Boissier, *La Relig. Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins.* 1892.
S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius.* 1905.
F. Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain.* 1907.
F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments relatifs au Mystères de Mithra.*
J. Réville, *La Religion à Rome sous les Sévères.* 1886.
G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer.* 1902.
De Broglie, *Problèmes et Conclusions de l'Histoire des Religions.* 1889.

ANCIENT KING-WORSHIP

By C. Lattey, S.J.

I

The Greek Kings

"With ravished ears
The monarch hears;
Assumes the God,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres."
Dryden, *Alexander's Feast.*

No pagan cult has so many and such important points of contact with Christianity as that which we are about to consider; none has lent itself to such various modes of attack upon it.

The god-despot has become somewhat more familiar to us lately. The Emperor of China is the "Son of Heaven," and the Mikado is no less divine. Oriental ruler-worship is in fact a very ancient institution, and among backward peoples represents a permanent tendency.[1] In the following pages, however, it will be necessary to confine our consideration of it to the Greek and Roman world, wherein it attains its chief historical significance. Thither it is really Alexander the Great who introduces it. On his death his kingdom is divided, and the cult undergoes various modifications in the independent monarchies. The

[1] "Kibuka, the war-god of the Baganda, is known to have been a real man of striking character about a hundred years ago, and his divine bones now repose in the Museum of Cambridge" (*Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1909; *Ancestors and Heroes*, by Dr. Farnell, pp. 421–2). Dr. Frazer has collected many instances in his lectures on the *Early History of the Kingship*, Lect. 5.; *cf.* in this series, Lecture ii. 15, 29.

monarchies in their turn are swallowed up by the Roman empire, which developes a system of its own.

The influence of East and West alike helped to make Alexander set up his claim to godhead. By his victories over Darius he became master of the whole Persian empire.

"Neither among the Assyrio-Babylonian Semites nor among the Iranians do we find the sovereign worshipped as a god. . . . The Persian kings again are undoubtedly of divine descent, distinguished by an imagined halo from ordinary men, but they never in any of their inscriptions call themselves gods."[1]

But on the Nile it was otherwise.

"Alexander became a god in Egypt naturally and without effort, by the sole force of the institutions and beliefs peculiar to the country. From the moment that he penetrated into the Nile valley and was recognized as Pharaoh, he could not avoid the necessity of having a divine father, and of being proclaimed son of Ammon, son of Ra, son of whichever of the greater or lesser gods he might invoke. Even the fact that he was a Greek could not save him from this law of fate: Egypt had had so many foreign masters that it had been forced to adapt its theory of solar royalty to the realities of its history, and the rites which had before served the native Pharaohs had long served those of foreign race."[2] *Cf.* Lecture viii. 10.

Alexander, however, like the Greeks in general, doubtless thought that the Persian monarchs were gods their whole dominions over, and not merely where they had ousted the Pharaohs. Nor did his subjects in the West appear likely to be much shocked by a like claim on his own part. For the Greeks, the hero had already to some extent spanned the bridge betwixt man and god. Heroes were at least supposed to have once led a mortal life; liturgically, their cult was different from that of the gods, but occasionally they themselves attained to godhead. Even if they did not do so in their own right, association in the cult of a god did not fall far short of this. The Greek

[1] "The Deification of Kings in the Greek Cities," by E. R. Bevan, *English Historical Review*, October 1901, p. 630. *Cf.* Lecture ix.

[2] *Comment Alexandre devint dieu en Égypte*, by G. Maspero, p. 6.

gods shared their altars and temples without difficulty, even with heroes; and Plutarch tells us that he who sacrificed to a god was understood to invoke also the sharers of his altar or temple, even though he did not expressly name them. Moreover, Alexander's own father, not to speak of Hector or Lysander, had set him an example; on the occasion of his marriage with Cleopatra he had had a statue representing himself as a god borne along with those of the twelve Olympian gods. Whether it was as a hero or a god that Alexander honoured his friend Hephæstion on his death is unfortunately in doubt; Ammon appears to have received him as associate god.

That Alexander himself claimed divine honours is unquestionable; all the ancient authorities are really at one on the point, from Hypereides to Arrian, and it was to be expected both from the historical antecedents and his own character. But he was only at the beginning of his schemes when he was struck down. The scramble for power that followed was pregnant of results for the history of ruler-worship. Eumenes, a brilliant upstart from Cardia, was the chief champion of the royal house. Unable, as a mere Greek, to secure the loyalty of the Macedonians to his own person, he ostentatiously declared himself the mere minister of their kings, and made the utmost use of the great name and prestige of Alexander. This latter, he proclaimed, had appeared to him in a vision, clothed in his royal robes, and administering his empire. The leading part still belonged to him. They must set up a royal tent, and within it a golden throne, upon which were to be placed the crown and sceptre and other royal insignia, together with the great king's former arms. Round about, the usual stools were set for the generals, Eumenes' own being in no way distinguished from the rest. Thither accordingly came the chief officers every morning, and they burnt precious spices before the throne, and prostrated themselves in worship as to

a god; after which they sat down to their deliberations. Thus officers and men felt that it was rather Alexander who commanded them, and were filled with a hopeful enthusiasm. Eumenes' tact and courtesy did the rest.

Nevertheless the jealousy of another governor eventually ruined him. Peucestes had striven to rival Eumenes even in his devotion to Alexander. When the army entered his own province, he offered a magnificent sacrifice to the gods Alexander and Philip, and feasted the whole of the forces: the two gods had altars set up to them in the midst of the banquet. With the ruin of the royal cause the worship of Alexander became less prominent.

Eumenes was crushed by Antigonus, the seat of whose power lay in Asia Minor; but the latter's success so increased his resources and ambition that the other leading governors, Ptolemy in Egypt, Lysimachus in Thrace, Cassander in Macedon, were swift to combine against their former champion. In 307 B.C. Antigonus' meteor-like son, Demetrius the Besieger, invaded Greece, and proceeded to "free" the cities which owned Cassander's allegiance. The way in which they expressed their gratitude is significant. Devotion to a monarch, even outside his own dominions, was rapidly coming to take the form of worship. On his side the monarch found these civic consecrations very convenient, for they secured him absolute supremacy without the necessity of intruding himself into the internal constitution. The honours paid to Demetrius and his father by Athens may serve as a type, though a somewhat exaggerated one, of the city-cult. They are best described in Plutarch's own words (Demetrius x.–xiii., xxiii.).

"Though Demetrius appeared so glorious by reason of his services, the Athenians rendered him obnoxious by the extravagant honours which they decreed him. For they were the first of all men to proclaim Demetrius and Antigonus kings, a title which they had hitherto religiously avoided, and which was, indeed, the only royal prerogative apparently remaining to

the descendants[1] of Philip and Alexander untouched and unshared by the rest. They alone, too, inscribed them the Gods Saviours (Soteres[2]); and instead of denominating the year, according to their ancestral custom, from the archon, they abolished his office, and elected anually in his place a priest of the Gods Saviours, and prefixed his name to their decrees and contracts. They likewise ordered that their portraits should be wrought in the holy veil with those of the gods. They consecrated the spot where first Demetrius alighted from his chariot, and erected an altar there to Demetrius Alighting.

"But the most monstrous idea of Stratocles—for it was he who devised these outrageously clever compliments—was this. He procured a decree, that those appointed to go upon public business to Antigonus or Demetrius should not be called ambassadors, but theoroi, like those who bear the customary sacrifices to Delphi and Olympia in the name of their cities.

"There was more besides, hotter than fire, as Aristophanes has it. Stratocles was outdone in servility. A law was passed that Demetrius, whenever he should visit Athens, should be received with the honours due to Demeter and Dionysus; and that he who exceeded the rest in the splendour and magnificence of the reception which he gave that prince, should have money out of the treasury wherewith to dedicate a memorial of his success. Finally they changed the name of the month Munychion to Demetrion, and called the last day of every month Demetrias, and the Dionysia, or feasts of Dionysus, Demetria. . . .

"But what was most of all monstrous and outrageous was the decree procured by Dromoclides the Sphettian, that they should consult Demetrius as an oracle as to the offering of the shields at Delphi. . . .

"By this mockery of adulation to one who was scarcely in his senses before, they rendered him perfectly insane. . . .

[Four years later.] "Although they had poured themselves out upon him before and had been lavish of all manner of honours, yet they contrived upon this occasion to appear fresh and new in their flattery. They handed over to him the back part of the Parthenon for a lodging; there he had his abode, and Athene was said to receive and entertain him—not a very decorous visitor, or a very suitable guest for the virgin goddess."

The first Ptolemy had installed Alexander as founder-hero in the greatest of his own foundations. The Egyptian tradition of royal godhead naturally

[1] Whose governors Alexander's former generals nominally were.

[2] The epithet was already sacred, and applied to Zeus and other gods.

led his descendants to take the lead in its more official developments. Ptolemy II. Philadelphus offered his father divine honours immediately upon his death. A poem by Theocritus would lead us to suppose that the Ptolemies, together with Alexander —whom the second Ptolemy perhaps promoted from heroship to godhead—and their supposed ancestor Heracles, became the sharers of Zeus' temple, associates in his cult. When Ptolemy I. Soter's wife died, she was associated with him in cult and feast, the two being known as the Gods Saviours (Soteres).

But the most important development of the Egyptian state-cult followed on the death of Ptolemy II. Philadelphus' full sister Arsinoe in 271–0 B.C. She had been given in marriage to Lysimachus, whose able and virtuous son, Agathocles, she had conspired to murder, and had then married her accomplice, her half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos, only to have her sons murdered, for fear of their rival claims, and herself to be banished. She came to the Egyptian court, and about the year 277 B.C. Ptolemy II. Philadelphus married her. This was in accordance with the practice of the Pharaohs; but it gave great offence in the Hellenistic world. Nevertheless his successors followed his example. To the native Egyptians the ruling sovereign and his sister wife would naturally be gods, but as yet to the Egyptian Greeks only after death. To avoid the awkwardness that would ensue were the Greek practice to lag behind that of the natives, and perhaps to oblige the native priesthood, Ptolemy II. Philadelphus deified himself along with his sister, and the new state-cult of Alexander and the θεοὶ ἀδελφοί, the gods brother and sister, was founded, a compromise between Egyptian and Greek ideas. It was probably an assembly of priests that conferred the title, a proceeding unheard of in the days of the Pharaohs; while to the Greeks the official deification of a living monarch was new. Eventually each pair of rulers, the Ptolemy and his sister-wife, came to be

tacked on regularly to the preceding pairs. The living and the dead were alike gods.

Arsinoe was identified alike with the Greek Aphrodite and the native Isis. She also became an associate goddess in all the Egyptian temples. She cannot have been very welcome, for this proved the pretext for sweeping into the royal coffers the dues of one-sixth on vineyards and wine hitherto payable to those temples. The lesson as to how royal divinity might be turned to profit was not forgotten. About a century later Antiochus IV. Epiphanes of Syria perhaps identified the Yahweh (Jehovah) of the Hebrews with Zeus (Jupiter), that is, with himself, when he took the treasures out of the temple; at Hieropolis, where the feminine deity was identified with Hera (Juno), he claimed the treasures as his wife's dowry, Zeus being of course Hera's husband. Again, when Antony (B.C. 39) was making his progress through Greece in the rôle of Dionysus, the Athenians thought to please this second Demetrius by betrothing Athena to him. He approved of the alliance—and exacted a million drachmæ as the dowry.

The two most important pieces of evidence for the development of the cult are the Canopus and Memphis decrees of the Egyptian priests, the latter of which is inscribed on the famous Rosetta stone, now in the British Museum. These decrees show the state-worship entirely in the hands of the Egyptian priesthood, and are an interesting token of that reaction of the native elements against the Greek which caused Egypt to fall an easy prey to the Romans.

The earlier claim of the dynasty was one to descent from Heracles. Nevertheless, the devotion of Ptolemies and Seleucids alike to the wine-god Dionysus was one that for various reasons grew steadily, and some of the later monarchs of both dynasties identified themselves with him. Mark Antony, the last of the Ptolemies, as we might almost

call him, was himself a new Dionysus, and even a new Osiris, while Cleopatra became Isis and Selene, the moon. Their children followed their example. Other identifications are to be found on the coins of the dynasty and elsewhere. The private cult of monarchs, whether by subjects or others, is always to be found alongside of the official worship.

In self-deification, as in all else, there was rivalry between the Ptolemies and the Seleucid dynasty in Syria. Seleucus, like the first Ptolemy, refrained from instituting a state-cult in his own honour, but willingly accepted, and even stimulated, private cults. On his death he was deified by his son Antiochus I. as Seleucus Zeus Nikator (the conqueror). Antiochus I. was in turn deified by his son Antiochus II. as Antiochus Apollo Soter. Apollo was the reputed ancestor of the dynasty; "Soter" he had assumed, while yet alive, after a defeat of the ravaging Gauls. Antiochus II. took the final step of deifying himself during his own lifetime; his epithet is simply Theos, God. It became the regular Seleucid practice to assume divine epithets. Thenceforward the system is complete; the departed kings are worshipped together, and last in the list comes he who is still reigning. The cult differs from the Egyptian in many respects. The deified wife-sister is not to be found. Again, it is a decentralised worship, like that of the later Roman emperors, whereas Egyptian state-cult was in a sense concentrated at Alexandria. Further, there is no trace of association of cults; the king is god absolutely in his own right.

The Macedonian kings, though honoured in various ways by cities, never set up an official worship; to Rome therefore was left the doubtful honour of introducing such a system into Europe. The Attalids at Pergamus were also very moderate. Deification was only allowed in the case of the dead; the cult of the living monarch was so toned down as to be more of the nature of honour than worship.

II

The Roman Emperors

"O Melibœus, a god hath wrought for us this peace.
For god to me he shall be alway; from our folds
Ofttimes a tender lamb his altar shall imbrue."
VIRGIL, *Eclogues*, i. 6–8.

As early as 195 B.C. the Smyrnæans had dedicated a temple to Rome, which had just shown its power by the defeat of Philip of Macedon. Alabanda in Caria, Rhodes, and other cities soon followed suit. A few years later we find Flaminius, the "liberator" of Greece, associated in the cult of Rome and Greek gods at Chalcis. In the hymn for his feast he is entitled Soter, Saviour, a title with which the reader is now familiar. Again, in 167–166 B.C., the King of Bithynia found it to his advantage to prostrate himself and greet the Senate[1] as "Gods Saviours;" but Polybius is too disgusted to give us full details of the incident. Soon all restraint is thrown off, and the irresponsible short-service proconsul becomes a god in his own right. Cicero scores it to his own credit that he declined a temple, although Roman law expressly permitted such honours to governors—a fact in itself significant. Pompey, the conqueror of the East, had a vast number.

In ruler-worship, as in much else, Julius Cæsar was the Alexander of Rome. With the worship of the proconsuls and the example of Egypt and other Hellenistic kingdoms before his eyes, it is not wonderful if he included in his idea of absolute monarchy the worship of the monarch; and he settled the question for his successors as well. The Senate, like Athens of old, proclaimed the decay of its ancient

[1] The appearance of the "God Senate" or "Goddess Senate"—the sex varies—on Hellenistic coins itself probably dates back from republican times.

spirit by abject decrees of worship. When Cæsar had defeated the Pompeians in Africa (46 B.C.) he allowed his statue to be erected opposite to that of Jupiter on the Capitol, with the world represented at his feet, and the inscription "He is a demi-god." Afterwards, however, frightened at a bad omen, he clambered up to the temple on hands and knees and removed the inscription. But after his final victory over the Pompeians in Spain he had less scruple. His statue was to be borne round with those of the gods at the games; it was also put up in the temple of Quirinus, with the inscription "To the Invincible God." Other honours of a more or less divine character continued to be paid him, "and at last they proclaimed him Jupiter Julius outright, and ordered that a temple should be dedicated to him and to his Clemency, appointing Antony their priest." [1] Notice the identification with Jupiter; also the association of Cæsar with Clemency, a goddess invented for the occasion. *Cf.* Lecture xiv. 5.

After his death Octavian upheld his uncle's godhead, and the other triumvirs (B.C. 43) joined in vigorously enforcing it. They erected a temple with peculiar rights of sanctuary, and secured an official deification by senate and people. But for himself, Octavian aimed at a divinity masked and comparatively inoffensive. Ever since Cæsar's death Sextus Pompey had been masquerading as Neptune's son in the Mediterranean; but to such a model Octavian paid no more heed than to Antony's vagaries in Egypt. His subjects in the East could by now scarcely think of their rulers save as gods; to these, accordingly, he allowed a more direct form of worship, as also in the barbarous portions of the empire. But nearer home he was for the most part more cautious. *Cf.* Lecture xiv. *ib.*

In B.C. 27 he accepted the name Augustus, "August," by which he is always known. It was essentially a

[1] Dio Cassius, xliv. 6.

sacred epithet. "When the emperor has received the name of Augustus," writes Vegetius, even under the Christian emperors, "faithful devotion must be shown him, as to a present and corporeal God." In B.C. 12 he became Pontifex Maximus, supreme pontiff, the head of the State religion. *Cf.* Lecture xiv. 3.

Emperor-worship was to be the hall-mark of loyalty. It was natural, therefore, that it should be prominent in the army. Not merely was the emperor commander-in-chief, with the exclusive right to the allegiance of the soldiers, but his image was set up for worship among the legionary standards. Nothing shows more the pride and power to which Sejanus rose under Tiberius, than the fact that the Syrian legions alone did not worship his image alongside of the emperor's; in no better way could the Parthian princes display their submission than by themselves solemnly performing such an act of worship. Galba's day was indeed past when a standard-bearer cast his image to the ground; and the mockery of his divinity was complete when his head was fixed upon a spear and he was hailed as Cupid (69 A.D.).

After the army, the provinces call for our consideration. Augustus would allow no temples to himself save in association with Rome. As early as 29 B.C. he had allowed the province of Asia to build a temple at Ephesus to Rome and the "divine" Julius for Romans, and another at Pergamus to Rome and himself for non-Romans. The distinction is characteristic of his policy. At the same time the Bithynians were given leave to dedicate a temple to Rome and Julius for Romans at Nicæa, to Rome and himself for non-Romans at Nicomedia. Temples to Rome and Augustus were now set up throughout the provinces of the Hellenistic East. Eventually these Eastern cults came to have for their object all preceding emperors who had been consecrated, together with the living ruler. *Cf.* Lecture xiv. 6.

In the private devotion of the East, as distinguished

from the provincial worship, two features are worth noting. The first is the practice of identification.

"During the first century the State religion was simply the worship of the Emperor or of Rome and the Emperor. But that was only a sham religion, a matter of outward show and magnificent ceremonial. It was almost devoid of power over the heart and will of man, when the first strong sense of relief from misery had grown weak, because it was utterly unable to satisfy the religious needs and cravings of human nature. From a very early time there seems to have existed in the Eastern provinces a tendency to give more reality to this Imperial religion by identifying the Divine Emperor with the local god, whatever form the latter had: thus the religious feelings and habits of the people in each district were associated to some extent with the Imperial divinity and the State religion."[1]

The same tendency was at work in the West, where we find the sacred imperial epithet "August" applied to all kinds of gods and goddesses, whereby some vague identification seems to be intended. In Rome itself, as will be seen, some of the more extravagant emperors directly impersonated their favourite gods.

The other noteworthy feature is the way in which the emperors inherit sacred epithets from the Greek monarchs through the Roman governors.

"The continuity of ruler-worship is curiously illustrated by the use of the term 'Soter' or Saviour. . . . In inscriptions of the Imperial period the Roman emperors often receive this title. The worthless Nero is even designated, by a monstrous abuse of language, the Saviour of the world (σωτὴρ τῆς οἰκουμένης).[2] . . . It was inscribed on a statue raised to Verres at Syracuse, and it seems to have been in honour of Verres Soter that the 'Verria' were celebrated. . . . At Mitylene after the Pirate Wars a statue was erected to Pompeius with the grandiose inscription, 'The People to their saviour and founder, Gnæus Pompeius Magnus, son of Gnæus, thrice hailed as imperator, who put an end to the wars which infested the world by land and sea.'"[3]

---

[1] *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, by Professor W. M. Ramsay, p. 123.

[2] In John iv. 42 the word is τὸν κόσμου, which in that gospel bears a rather different connotation.

[3] *The Beginnings of Cæsar-Worship*, by E. Fiddes, M.A., in the Owens College Historical Essays, pp. 6, 7.

In the West it was at the outposts of the empire, among the more or less barbaric tribes, that Augustus felt he could act with a free hand. In B.C. 12, the same year in which he became Pontifex Maximus, Drusus, his wife's son by a previous marriage, consecrated to "Rome and Augustus"[1] at Lugudunum (Lyons) the altar which was to be the centre of imperial loyalty for "the three Gauls," the three administrative divisions into which the newly-conquered territory in Gaul, as distinct from the older province ("Provence") in the South, was divided. At this altar

"thenceforth every year on this day (August 1st) the festival of these gods was to be celebrated by the joint action of the Gauls. The representatives of all the cantons chose from their midst year by year the 'priest of the three Gauls,' who, on the emperor's day, presented sacrifice to the emperor and conducted the festal games in connection with it. This representation of the land had not only a power of administering its own property by means of officials, who belonged to the chief circles of the provincial nobility, but also a certain share in the general affairs of the country."[2]

These further powers could only serve to enhance the prestige of the imperial priesthood. A little after, a similar altar was erected at Cologne. Roman policy at this time aimed at the subjugation of Germany as far as the Elbe, and this altar was to be for the subject Germans what that at Lyons was for the Gauls. The abandonment of the conquest of Germany, first by Augustus and then by Tiberius, constitutes one of the turning-points in European history.

North-west Spain may also be reckoned as belonging under Augustus to the barbaric fringe of the empire. There, too, we find him setting up the worship of "Rome and Augustus"; and the same regard for physical and ethnographical rather than

[1] Not to Rome and the *genius* of Augustus, as Mommsen says [*Provinces of Roman Empire*, Eng. trans., i. p. 94 (VIII., chap. iii.)], contrary to all the inscriptions.

[2] Mommsen, *ibid.*

political divisions, which in Gaul had led him to set up one altar for three provinces, here resulted in three districts (*conventus*) of the same province each possessing an altar of its own. Augustus also appears to have set up the same joint worship in the provinces along the Danube, the other great frontier river of the Roman empire in Europe.

The next most important development in the provincial cults is thus tersely given by Tacitus: "Leave was granted to the Spaniards to erect a temple to Augustus in the colony of Tarraco (Tarragona), and an example set to all the provinces." This was under Tiberius, a little after Augustus' death. In the West Tiberius altogether forbade temples and priests to be decreed to himself; in fine words he declared himself but a mortal, well content if his worth and careful government could raise him a fair and abiding temple in the hearts of his subjects. But he insisted on the worship of his predecessor. So the provinces—some willingly, and some unwillingly, as Dio Cassius remarks — everywhere erected temples to "Divus Augustus," the divine Augustus; and the province definitely becomes the unit of worship. It is also characteristic of Tiberius that in the East we find associated in his cult his mother, the link binding him to Augustus, and the "sacred senate."

Thus, in the West, state-cults which date from Tiberius and his immediate successors are not directed to the reigning monarch, nor is there any further need to associate the cult of the glorified Augustus with that of Rome. In the last final development of Cæsar-worship all the Augusti are worshipped together, and the reigning emperor is understood to be included among them, as in the East.

Throughout the empire the provincial priesthood was the highest pinnacle of local distinction, open only to the richest and most illustrious. Freedmen grown wealthy in business, though excluded from priesthoods and real magistracies, found a new social

dignity open to them in the institution of the Sexviri Augustales, whose very name showed its end to be the honour of the emperor. Magistrates without true functions, they were well content to earn their title and local prominence by sustaining the burden of public games. *Cf.* Lecture xiv. 6.

In Italy the direct worship of Augustus is found chiefly in the southern ports, where Greek influence would be strong. The official worship in Rome stood in a category absolutely by itself. For home consumption the cult was largely diluted. It is only by taking as the typical cult this, which in reality is the most untypical of all, that any plausible support can be found for the statement that the Roman emperors only became gods upon their death.

At the street altars of Rome the cult of the emperor's genius comes to the fore. There it was associated with the Lares,[1] to be worshipped by the "masters of the districts" into which the city was divided, men elected from among the lower classes, which Augustus thus committed in their turn to his own worship. The genius was but a thin disguise for the emperor himself, as thin as that of his "numen" (a word which we can scarcely refuse to translate "divinity"), his "virtues," and other devices used to temper the imperial godhead. To the senate was reserved the decree of "consecration," or "apotheosis," whereby the departed emperor became "divus," "divine." Of the use of this term we have already had some examples; it became quite technical, implying at once godhead and, like the Greek "hero," death.[2] The senate could also pass a decree of reprobation upon a departed emperor, the "condemnation of his memory," the official annulling of his reign.

[1] For Lares and Genius, *cf.* Lecture 13, *The Religion of Early Rome*, pp. 10–11.

[2] "Sit divus dum non sit vivus," said Caracalla of his murdered brother: "let him be divine, provided he be not alive." Much earlier the senate considered that a temple to the "divine" Nero (divo Neroni) in his lifetime would be a bad omen.

His acts were cancelled, his statues thrown down, his name deleted from inscriptions. But this was a fate reserved for the worst emperors; and a compliant successor was also needed. Rarely and under peculiar circumstances there was neither consecration nor condemnation.

Of the actual ceremony of consecration we have a minute description from Herodian. His account refers more explicitly to the opening of the third century, but he implies that the usages are of long standing:—

"It is the custom of the Romans to deify those of the emperors who die leaving children to succeed them;[1] and this honour they call apotheosis. Throughout the city there is displayed a certain mourning, mingled with feast and worship. The body of the dead they bury in human fashion, with a splendid funeral; but they make a wax image in all respects resembling him, and expose it to view in the vestibule of the palace, on a lofty ivory couch of great size, spread with cloth of gold. The figure is made pallid, like a sick man. During most of the day the whole senate sit by the couch on the left side, clothed in black mantles, and on the right all the ladies upon whom the rank of their husbands or fathers bestows high position. Nor are any of the latter beheld wearing gold or adorned with necklaces, but they are clothed in plain white garments and present the appearance of mourners. These ceremonies continue for seven days; and physicians keep entering and approaching the couch, and after inspecting the patient ever report that he is worse. And when they have made believe that he is dead, some of the noblest youths of the equestrian order and others selected from the senatorial take up the couch, and bear it along the Sacred Way, and set it forth in the old forum, where the Roman magistrates take their oath on quitting office. Platforms are built up on each side, arranged like steps: upon one of them stands a choir of youths of highest birth and of the senatorial order, and on the opposite there is another, composed of ladies of rank; together they sing hymns and songs of praise to the deceased, modulated in a solemn and mournful strain. After this the couch is borne to the Field of Mars without the city, in the broadest part of which a square pile is

[1] This was not essential; but the remark indicates well the greater uncertainty as to how the dead emperor would be treated when a stranger succeeded, especially if a successful rebel.

constructed entirely of logs of timber of the largest size, in the shape of a chamber. The whole interior is filled with faggots, while the outside is adorned with cloth of gold and ivory statues and rich pictures. Upon this, another chamber, similar in shape and adornment, but smaller, is built, with open doors and windows; and above it a third and a fourth, each smaller than that below, the top one being the least of all. One might compare the structure to lighthouses erected near harbours, and usually called 'phari,' the beacons of which guide ships at night to a safe entry.

"Now they set the couch in the second story, and they collect all the spices and incenses that the earth produces, and join thereunto for a fragrant smell all manner of fruits and herbs and juices, and they lay them on in a heap. For all nations and cities and men of rank or high station vie with each other in sending these last gifts in honour of the emperor. But when a vast pile of spices has been raised and the whole space filled, a horse-procession takes place around the fabric, and the whole equestrian order courses about it, wheeling round it with orderly evolutions in pyrrhic movement and measure. And chariots pass round it in like orderly array, bearing men clad in official robes, who wear masks made to resemble the most distinguished Roman generals and emperors. When all this is done, he who has succeeded to the empire takes a torch and applies it to the pyre, and the others set fire to it on every side. The whole is most easily burnt up by the fire by reason of the accumulated faggots and spices. And from the highest and smallest story, as from a parapet, an eagle is released, to mount into the sky with the flame, which is believed by the Romans to bear the emperor's soul from earth to heaven; and thereafter he is worshipped with the other gods."[1]

Passing from fact to sentiment, we may remark how beautifully the Augustan poets sang the birth-song of the imperial cult, the birth-song of the golden age of peace and prosperity. The lines of Virgil prefixed to this chapter may serve as a specimen. But the devotion of the poets, like so much of the Cæsar devotion, soon comes to ring hollow. Lucan exhorts Nero earnestly to fix his seat hereafter in the precise middle of the sky, assuring him (subtle flattery!) that otherwise he will upset the equilibrium of the heavens.

[1] Herodian, iv.

A word should be added on a later development of the official cult. We find both Gaius and Nero addressed in the East as "the New Sun," and there are other examples of the influence of the solar cults upon private devotion. At Rome the triumph of the Eastern worships in general, and of Mithra in particular, may be said to date from Commodus (180–193 A.D.). From his reign onwards the sacred fire was carried before the emperors, which, like the radiated crown introduced by Nero, is derived through the Hellenistic monarchs from Eastern sun-worship. Again, of the titles, "pious, fortunate, invincible," regularly employed by the emperors after Septimus Severus (193–211 A.D.), the last, at all events, is an epithet borrowed from the sun, or from Mithra with his solar character accentuated. But actual identity with gods was never a feature in the state worship, and in the West even unofficial identification of emperor and sun never got beyond the vaguest beginnings, even in "the triumph of solar monotheism in which Paganism ended."[1]

It only remains to make a few notes on the vagaries of individual emperors. Augustus and Tiberius are the founders of the system. Under Gaius it became a screaming farce, and for the Jews all but a bloody tragedy. Gaius was proud of his descent from Antony and of his Eastern connections; he too had something of the Ptolemy about him, and one way in which he manifested the fact was in his relations with his sister Drusilla. It will be remembered that Herod Agrippa II. and his sister Bernice were under a like suspicion, and that the latter bore a name common in the Ptolemaic dynasty. On Drusilla's death he had her consecrated as "the divine Drusilla." His devotion to his own divinity can only be called frantic. He pretended to be all manner of gods,

[1] *Cf.* Lect. 16, *The Religion of Mithra*, p. 22; Lect. 14, *Religion of Imperial Rome*, pp. 28–29. For the influence of solar cults on later emperor-worship, *cf.* Cumont, *Mystères de Mithra*, i., part ii. chap. iii.

both male and female, and used to deck himself out accordingly; now he would wield the thunderbolt of Jove, now he would wear Hercules' club and lion-skin, now he would be Juno, Diana, or Venus. He became his own priest, with his horse for colleague. He had the most famous and venerated statues of the gods brought from Greece, and had his own head put on to them.

His successor Claudius probably had what became the "temple of the Divine Claudius" built to himself in his own lifetime at Colchester (Camulodunum). He prided himself not a little on his British expedition, and had his son called Britannicus. He was following Augustus' example of setting up the worship of the living emperor on the barbaric fringe of the empire, but it was no longer necessary to associate the cult of Rome with his own. Tacitus (*Annals*, xiv. 31) tells us that the Britons were under no delusions about this temple: "it was looked upon as the very citadel of a rule never to end; and those chosen to be the priests wasted all their fortunes under the semblance of religion." Here we seem to catch the first of many groans at the terrible expense of the imperial priesthoods.

The Emperor Hadrian (117–138 A.D.) appears to have shocked the feelings even of many of the pagans by sanctioning a widespread apotheosis of his minion Antinous; much more were the Christians moved to indignation at this hallowing of unnatural vice. At the death of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 A.D.), on the other hand, there was a great outburst of public and private devotion to his memory, which took the form of worship; a genuine, if misled, testimony to the character of the man. And yet even Marcus Aurelius had done something to lower Cæsar-worship; on the death alike of his brother through adoption and of his wife he allowed his piety to take the form of consecration, though the former, if not the latter also, was a wholly worthless character.

We may fitly close with Diocletian (284–305 A.D.), that mighty ruler, who quelled militarism, secured the peace and safety of the imperilled empire, and established a strong bureaucracy which proved for centuries the mainstay of the Byzantine empire. His scheme for a fourfold division of the empire was but a mistake which was destined for a short period to make confusion worse confounded, and then pass away. We are concerned here with his efforts to increase the sanctity and mystery of his own person:—

"The robe of cloth of gold, the slippers of silk dyed in purple and embroidered with gems, the regal diadem wreathed around the brow, the titles of Lord and Master and God, the lowly prostrations, and the thousand intricacies of complicated etiquette which fenced round the imperial presence, were all attributed by short-sighted observers to the insolent pride of a Dalmatian slave intoxicated with unlooked-for prosperity, but were in reality part and parcel of a sagacious and well-meditated plan, which sought to encircle the person of the sovereign with a sort of sacred and mysterious grandeur."[1]

It is evident that from such a one as this the Christians could not look for mercy. Worship and persecution alike reach their climax in Diocletian.

III

Christianity

"Hast thou not decreed, that every man that should make a request to any god or man for thirty days, but to thyself, O king, should be cast into the den of the lions?"—Dan. vi. 12.

Ruler-worship came from the East; Augustus and Alexander set the West to learn a degrading lesson of servility. Yet such a proceeding would scarcely have been possible had not scepticism been so much in vogue. Flattery lightly prostitutes

[1] *Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, art. "Diocletianus," by William Ramsay.

forms of worship in which it has ceased to believe. Augustus himself, though he had the same eye for the power of religion that Napoleon had, was far from being a fervent believer. Hence, like many another sagacious politician, he was led to play with forces of whose latent power he did not dream. He thought to gain for his rule everywhere the supreme sanction of religion. In the way in which he carried out his policy he showed himself a great ruler; he would have shown himself a greater had he adopted a policy of restraint. Even a religious sanction need not have run to such extremes. All unconsciously, Augustus sowed the wind, and his successor reaped the whirlwind, the scorn of the Germans, the loathing of the Jews; above all, the aloofness and the martyrdoms of the Christians.

The Christians' repugnance to ruler-worship was an inheritance from the Jews, a necessary consequence of adherence to the one true God. This worship had proved a rock of offence at the time of the Maccabees. The coins of Antiochus IV. show us his title of God Manifest (Epiphanes), by which the Samaritans, to proclaim their loyalty in contrast to the Jews, address him. His statue was set up in the temple.

Under Gaius the Alexandrians, knowing his weakness alike for the city and the worship of the Ptolemies, destroyed several synagogues, and secured their impunity by placing the emperor's statue in the rest. The Jewish deputation which went to seek redress learnt with dismay that the emperor was bent upon setting up his own statue as "Gaius, the new Zeus Manifest," in the temple at Jerusalem. The governor of Judea, and even Herod Agrippa, alike failed to turn him from his purpose. There had already been trouble elsewhere in Judæa. Moreover, there was a counter-embassy from Alexandria to be reckoned with.

"Gaius was at this time engaged in transforming the house and gardens of the Lamias into a royal residence, and the rival embassies from Alexandria were summoned thither. They found

him hurrying about from room to room, surrounded by architects and workmen, to whom he was giving directions, and they were compelled to follow in his train. Stopping to address the Jews, he asked, 'Are you the God-haters who deny my divinity, which all the world acknowledges?' The Alexandrian envoys hastened to put in their word, 'Lord and master, these Jews alone have refused to sacrifice for your safety.' 'Nay, Lord Gaius,' said the Jews, 'it is a slander. We sacrificed for you, not once, but thrice; first when you assumed the empire, then when you recovered from your sickness, and again for your success against the Germans.' 'Yes,' observed Gaius, 'you sacrificed *for* me, not *to* me'; and thereupon he hurried to another room, the Jews trembling, and their rivals jeering, 'as in a play.' The next remark he addressed to them was, 'Pray, why do ye not eat pork?' Finally he dismissed them with the observation, 'Men who deem me no god are after all more unlucky than guilty.'"[1]

Nevertheless this harebrained emperor did not abandon his design, and it was only his murder at Rome that saved the Jews from an earlier doom. As it was,

"the persecution ended with the death of the emperor; under Domitian no attempt was made to enforce a worship which neither compulsion nor persuasion would have brought them to accept. Nevertheless, they had no scruple in turning the attention of the populace and the authorities to the resistance which the less favoured Christians offered to the Imperial religion."[2]

This latter statement refers more especially to the Jews of Asia Minor. In the final destruction of the nation emperor-worship played a lesser part; the catastrophe was due largely to the ascendancy gained by the more fanatical party, and to that hope of a temporal deliverance which was never abandoned.

In the New Testament itself we already find traces of ruler-worship. "The voice of a god, and not of a man," cried the Tyrians and Sidonians to Herod Agrippa I. (Acts xii. 22); "and forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he gave not the glory to God." We are reminded of the honours which

[1] *Student's Roman Empire*, by J. B. Bury, p. 228. The details of the interview are from the pen of the learned Jewish philosopher Philo, who was himself one of the ambassadors.

[2] *The Apocalypse of St. John*, by Dr. Swete, p. lxxxix.

Nero was wont to exact for his "divine voice"; we are reminded, too, that the Hellenistic culture which the Herods, as the loyal friends of Rome, so largely patronised, was from of old steeped in ruler-worship. Josephus (*Antiq.*, xix. 8) displays Herod to us repeating his offence, in the short space between his interview with the Tyrians and Sidonians and his death. He was exhibiting shows at Cæsarea in honour of Claudius:—

"On the second day of the shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, of a wonderful contexture, and came into the theatre early in the morning. There the silver, lit up by the first beating of the sun's rays upon it, shone forth marvellously, and by its flashing cast a fear and terror upon those who gazed at him. And straightway his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, not for his good, addressing him as a god; and they added, 'Deal kindly with us; if hitherto we have revered thee as man, yet henceforth we confess thee superior to mortal nature.' The king rebuked them not, nor rejected their impious flattery. . . . A great pain arose in his belly, from the outset most violent. Looking, therefore, upon his friends, he said, 'I, your god, am now bidden depart this life, for so Providence confutes the lying words even now spoken of me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am now hurried away by death.'"

The Asiarchs mentioned in Acts xix. 31 as befriending St. Paul were probably the high-priests of the temples of imperial worship in Pergamus, Smyrna, and elsewhere, who assembled together at Ephesus and other great cities at stated periods under the presidency of the supreme high-priest of the entire provincial cult. Probably, too, a festival of the imperial worship was being celebrated — festivals which the Christians soon had but too much reason to dread. For times were to change. A shrine and a great altar of Augustus had already found their way within the sacred precincts of Artemis. Instead of the friendly relations between St. Paul and official circles depicted in the Acts, there are soon thunders against the Beast, the World-power summed up in the ruler of the then Babylon, whom

"all the dwellers on the earth shall adore, everyone whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. If any hath an ear, let him hear." (Apoc. xiii. 8–9.)

It was fitting that a warning such as this should be directed to the churches established in the province most devoted to the cult. Yet it was not only for that place and time that it was needed. All over the Roman dominions the Beast opened his mouth in blasphemy; everywhere is found the assumption of divine names in public documents and inscriptions, everywhere "the patience and the faith of the saints" was proved in captivity and torture. "Swear by Cæsar's genius, and I release thee," urged the pro-consul; but Polycarp, the disciple of John, would not blaspheme. The same demand was made at many trials of Christians. In the middle of the third century we find it put forward as an ancient law that no one can be a centurion who does not sacrifice to the emperors.

The disloyalty with which the early Christians were charged, their "incivism," or avoidance of public life and public burdens, are mainly to be ascribed to the all-pervading emperor-worship. What was the precise legal charge upon which they were put to death is a more difficult question. M. Allard, whose authority on the subject of the early Christian persecutions is second to none, prefers the hypothesis of a law against Christians framed under Nero or Domitian. All are agreed that in the third century persecution was by direct edict.

"But whatever system we choose to adopt, it will make little change in the history of the persecutions of the first two centuries; whether the martyrs were convicted in virtue of a law of Nero's or Domitian's, or whether they were convicted summarily in virtue of the 'coercitio'[1] of the magistrates; whether they were condemned for their belief, or for 'lèse majesté,'[2] it remains

[1] A power of summary jurisdiction against mischievous persons, unfettered by the ordinary rules of criminal procedure.

[2] High treason, but here so understood as to embrace offences against the emperor's godhead.

true that it was directly or indirectly for a religious matter. Hence the exceptional nature of the proceedings against Christians. No witnesses were called for the prosecution, nor did the judge make any effort to extort a confession; on the contrary, the object of the court was invariably to make the prisoner plead 'not guilty.' If he did so, he was released. Torture was only employed when he refused, but the object of the torture was not to force the prisoner to acknowledge his guilt, but to extort from him an avowal that he is no longer guilty of the crime of Christianity. As apologists remarked, this was a reversal of the common procedure against criminals. The judge, indeed, passes sentence at the termination of the proceedings, but this sentence had actually been dictated by the prisoner, since until the very last moment it rested with him to secure either his condemnation or his acquittal by either affirming or denying himself to be a Christian."[1]

It would be a great mistake to suppose that with the advent of a Christian emperor, if such Constantine is to be called, the whole system collapsed like a pack of cards. He does not appear to have lent himself to any actual adoration of his own person; but it must be admitted that he sailed very near the wind.[2] After the victory of the Milvian Bridge (312 A.D.) the Senate, largely pagan, dedicated to him the temple intended by Maxentius for his son Romulus; but no divinity is directly attributed to him in the inscription, and perhaps no pagan rites were performed. At all events, in allowing the town of Hispellum, on the borders of Etruria, to erect a temple to himself and his family, he expressly forbade such rites. Yet both he and his officials alike spoke of his "numen"[3]; his official acts, his virtues, his family, are still dubbed divine, and he himself eternal. Even to the Christian emperors their subjects knelt down, and kissed the imperial purple; and after their death many of them duly became

[1] *Ten Lectures on the Martyrs*, by Paul Allard, Eng. trans., pp. 89–90.

[2] The (more or less) Christian poet Ausonius in his compliments to the emperors Gratian and Theodosius sails even nearer. See the *Life of St. Melania*, by Card. Rampolla, Eng. trans., p. 11, where the abuse is further illustrated.

[3] *Cf. supra*, p. 15.

Divi. Towards the beginning of the fifth century we find Philostorgius accusing the Christians of Constantinople of offering sacrifice and prayer to Constantine's statue, with incense and lights. This historian's witness is suspect, by reason of his calumnies against the orthodox; and doubtless he exaggerates. Nevertheless the veneration paid to the Byzantine emperors' images even by Christians was excessive. They were set on tables, with lights burning round. Nor was the evil lessened by Christ being represented in the imperial robes. Yet, needless to say, in the iconoclastic persecutions it was the images of Christ and His saints that were sought out; the emperor's were respected.[1]

To understand these phenomena correctly, one must bear in mind that for a long time a large part of the empire remained pagan; further, that the cult had become largely secularized, that is, that much that really had immediate reference to it was felt more as court etiquette or official style than as genuine adoration. Again, the system had become part of the complicated state machinery, which was not lightly to be dislocated. So true is this, that we even find Christians undertaking the provincial priesthood, evidently deeming it little more than a civil function, which was too important for their career to neglect. The Church, on its side, looked askance at such proceedings. Pope Innocent I. (401–417 A.D.), for example, forbade any such to be received into the ranks of the clergy.

Little by little much that was incongruous came to be abandoned. Yet, alike as supreme pontiffs and very gods, the emperors had come to play a part in the state religion which they could not bring themselves wholly to abandon. True, from the outset a sharp distinction was drawn between the things of Cæsar and the things of God, between the sphere of the Church and the sphere of the State. Eusebius in

[1] *Cf. Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*; art. "Adoration," by Dom Leclercq.

his *Life of Constantine* speaks of the presidents of the Council of Nice as being other than Constantine himself, and relates how Constantine told some bishops that (iii. 13) it was their province to supervise matters within the Church; his own, what lay without (iv. 24). "Fear the day of judgement," wrote Bishop Hosius of Cordova to Constantius; "keep thyself clean against it. Meddle not in Church matters, nor give us orders touching them, but rather learn from us herein. To thee God has committed empire; to us He has entrusted what belongs to the Church. . . . It is written, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."[1] "When has a decree of the Church received its authority from the emperor?" asks St. Athanasius.[2] "The emperor," says St. Ambrose, "is within the Church, not over the Church."[3]

But in 330 A.D. Constantine moved the seat of his government to Byzantium. It was almost a first principle with Eastern bishops that the Church was to follow the State in the mutual relations of bishoprics. From a quite insignificant diocese "New Rome" came to be the second patriarchate, the popes ultimately acquiescing for the sake of peace.

"The Emperors, while they themselves dealt most masterfully with their Court bishop, still used every means to get his position raised in the hierarchy. It was part of their policy of centralization; it helped to rivet the loyalty of their subjects to their city; through their own bishop they could the more easily govern the Church. Indeed, nowhere does the tyranny of Cæsar over the things of God, which characterizes the policy of these Emperors, show so clearly as in their dealings with their bishops at Constantinople; nowhere is there a more degrading example of subjection to the civil government than the mingled contempt and furtherance that these bishops received from the Emperor."[4]

How this state of things plunged the Eastern

[1] Athanasius, *History of the Arians*, 44.
[2] *Ibid.* 52.
[3] Epistle 21, Against Auxentius.
[4] *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, by A. Fortescue, Ph.D., D.D., p. 30.

churches into schism is well known. Yet it was an emperor reconciled to the Church and a true Catholic who fell heroically before the walls of Constantinople; it was the heathen conqueror Mohammed II. who finally decided upon that separation which still lasts. Under the new order the patriarch gained even more authority, by becoming the civil head of the "orthodox" for purposes of government; but his degradation before his temporal master was increased a hundredfold. Henceforth he is invested with the tokens of spiritual jurisdiction by an unbaptized Sultan, who enforces a heavy bribe and, in order to receive it again, early cuts short his tenure of office. Worse than this:

"It has become a regular principle that wherever there is a free state there shall be a free and independent national church. It is again the old Byzantine idea of making the Church follow the vagaries of civil politics, that we saw to be the root of the claims of the See of Constantinople, and indeed the original root of the great schism. Only the idea is turned against the very see that had grown and flourished on it. . . . The process is nearly always the same. As soon as the first national Assembly, or House of Deputies, or whatever it may be, of the new State meets, it passes a law that the national Orthodox Church of the land acknowledges no Head but Christ; it then forms a Holy Synod on the Russian model, giving all possible authority over the Church to the civil government ("no head but Christ" always means this), and lastly sends a note to the Patriarch to inform him that he has ceased to reign in the land in question. Of course the Patriarch is furious, and generally begins by excommunicating the new schismatics in a mass, but eventually has to accept things (Russia makes him do so as a rule), and, swallowing his pride, he receives the Holy Synod as his 'Sister in Christ.'"[1]

The West has had its own excesses.[2] Indeed, in the case of one monarch we find a perhaps conscious imitation of emperor-worship. The dedication of the

[1] *Orthodox Eastern Church*, p. 277.

[2] On the question of the supposed ecclesiastical character and sacerdotal vestures of kings, see *The Coronation Ceremonial*, by H. Thurston, S.J. (C.T.S., 6d.).

statue of Louis XIV. at the Place Vendôme reminds us of Constantine and Hispellum.

"The Duke of Gesvres, Governor of Paris, on horseback, at the head of the civic guard, performed before it the evolutions, reverences, and other ceremonies taken and imitated from the consecration of Roman emperors. It is true there was neither incense nor victims ; some sort of consideration has to be shown for the title of Most Christian King."[1]

And yet the most regalist of French monarchs never ventured upon an Act of Supremacy, concentrating in the crown all spiritual jurisdiction, to the subversion of Christian unity and freedom.

"That Rome exercised her spiritual power by the willing obedience of Englishmen in general, and that they regarded it as a really wholesome power, even for the control it exercised over secular tyranny, is a fact which it requires no very intimate knowledge of early English literature to bring home to us. Who was 'the holy blissful martyr' whom Chaucer's pilgrims went to seek at Canterbury? One who had resisted his sovereign in the attempt to interfere with the claims of the papal church. For that cause, and for no other, he had died ; and for that cause, and no other, pilgrims who went to visit his tomb regarded him as a saint. It was only after an able and despotic king had proved himself stronger than the spiritual power of Rome that the people of England were divorced from their Roman allegiance ; and there is abundant evidence that they were divorced from it at first against their will."[2]

From the Byzantine emperors appears to have been derived the practice of kissing the feet of the popes ; at all events, in the first two instances recorded in the Book of the Popes it is Byzantine emperors themselves who do so.[3] At the election of Leo IV. (847 A.D.) the custom is spoken of as an ancient one. But it was only the emperors whose letters were "sacred," whose commands were "divine"; as late

[1] Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, ed. Chérnel, ii. p. 20.

[2] *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, by James Gairdner, C.B., i. p. 5.

[3] The popes in question are John I. (523–526 A.D.) and Constantine (708–715 A.D.), the emperors Justin and Justinian II., who is called "the most Christian Augustus."

as the eighth century the "sacred" palace in Rome was not the papal, but the imperial palace, then the ordinary residence of the Byzantine exarch's lieutenant. Thus the features in the papal court and style whose historical origin is to be found in ruler-worship are very few and insignificant; and they are easily accounted for by the fact that the papal monarchy, unlike that at Constantinople, was essentially sacred.[1] Some imitations of a later age may be set aside as meaningless and artificial. It is true, for example, that Gaius assumed Jupiter's supreme title of "Optimus Maximus," Best and Greatest, and that we meet it again on the tomb of the Farnese pope Paul III.; but this is only one more example of the execrable taste with which the Renaissance sought to deck out Christianity in the forms of ancient paganism.

Hero-worship as such does not fall within the scope of this pamphlet; nevertheless it may be useful to give a short extract from Father Delehaye's excellent chapter on pagan survivals and reminiscences in his *Legends of the Saints*:—

"The cultus of the saints is not an outcome of hero-worship, but of reverence for the martyrs; and the honours paid to the martyrs from the outset by the early Christians, men who had known the baptism of blood, are a direct consequence of the high dignity of those witnesses to Christ as proclaimed by our Lord Himself.

"It seems scarcely necessary to insist that hero-worship among the Greeks never possessed the same theological foundation and was never expressed in the same exact definitions which always place an infinite distance between God and man favoured by God. But it had an analogous starting-point and developed under the influence of general ideas which are not without some affinity with those which urged swarms of the faithful towards

[1] What more appropriate title for the popes than "Pontifex Maximus" (p. 11), already ironically applied to them by Tertullian after his lapse into Montanism? Yet though the Emperor Gratian (367–383 A.D.) abandoned the title, it appears to have been centuries later that they took it up.

the tombs of the martyrs. Hence it necessarily arrived at practically identical consequences, and the history of these two cults represents a logical and parallel development, without, however, any interdependence."[1]

Some terms familiar through Cæsar-worship came to be applied to our Lord. "Epiphanes," as we have seen, signified a God Manifest. St. Paul applies the corresponding noun (our "Epiphany") and verb to Christ's first and second comings.[2] But for the Christian connotation of "Soter," Saviour, we must go almost exclusively to the Old Testament. In the Septuagint it represents the Hebrew root ישע, from which the word "Jesus" itself is formed, as also "Isaiah" and "Josue (Joshua)." Jesus was to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). Again, it is in the earliest stages, in the time of Christ and the primitive Jewish Church, that emphasis is placed on the term *υἱὸς θεοῦ*, Son of God. St. Paul's and St. John's strong expressions have no connection with it. That it was used of Augustus in the sense of "Son of *the* God,"[3] *divi filius*, referring to Julius Cæsar, signifies as little as Augustus' own godhead. There is no reason to suppose that the pagan use of the title ever helped to reconcile anyone to Christ's godhead. By "God" Christians meant Jehovah, not a dead emperor. The early Church upheld a monotheism no less rigid than that of the Old Testament; otherwise men might have found it as easy as do some latter-day Christians to acquiesce in "the divinity of Christ."

It is impossible to do more than briefly allude to the attempt made by Julian the Apostate (361–363 A.D.) to remodel the pagan religion upon the basis of the imperial priesthoods, in almost slavish imitation

[1] *Legends of the Saints*, by Père Delehaye, S.J., Bollandist; Eng. trans., pp. 165–6.

[2] *Cf. Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. "Epiphany," by the Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.

[3] To translate simply "Son of God," as in the English translation of Professor Deissman's *Bible Studies*, p. 131, is at least misleading. The German retains the ambiguity of the Greek. For divus see p. 15.

of the Christian hierarchy.[1] Even the Christian services and, for the most part, the Christian virtues were to be copied. Julian hoped to rival Christian almsgiving by a system of government grants! His sand-castles were levelled by the rising tide.

The moral of Cæsar-worship was pointed out by a French Jesuit in 1903, and his words have proved only too prophetic. Englishmen may take a warning in time.

"The God-Cæsar is to be recognized by his craving to rule over consciences, to drag all down to the same level, to exact towards himself a limitless homage, to tolerate religion only as an instrument of rule.

"There will always be something wanting to the holocaust which he demands, so long as he has not taken all precautions against the possible awakening of any sort of independence, against all aspirations towards a higher ideal, against all appeal to a justice of which he himself is not the standard.

"What he is looking for, what alone can satisfy his thirst for dominion, his thirst for omnipotence, his thirst for adoration, is the abdication pure and simple of the Christian conscience."[2]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

L'Abbé Beurlier, *De divinis honoribus Alexandri*, etc.; *Le cult rendu aux empereurs romains.*

J. Toutain, *Cultes païens dans l'empire romain*, tome i.

E. Kornemann, "Zur Geschichte der antiken Herrscherkulte" (in the *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte*, 1901).

[1] Julian's attempted revival is well described by M. Allard, *Julien l'Apostat*, vol. ii. bk. vi. chap. i.

[2] *Études*, vol. 95 (April–June 1903), "Le Dieu César au temps de Septime Sévère," by A. d'Alés, S.J., pp. 763–4.

THE RELIGION OF MITHRA

By C. C. Martindale, S.J.

An investigation into the religion of the Persian god Mithra is no mere piece of pedantry or of antiquarian curiosity.

His name, once invoked by millions from Ganges to Thames, is again becoming popular among us. Only, while Christian fathers in the childhood of the Church indignantly accused the Eastern worship of imitating their own doctrine and ritual, to-day we are being told that Christianity is a mere *réchauffé* of the cults prevalent in Europe at the time of its birth; that it borrowed from right and left; that it only reflects current aspirations; that to Mithraism it owes much of what we hold peculiarly our own.

And men who treasure their traditional beliefs are asking, anxiously perhaps, who definitely *was* this Mithra, whose worship appears so suddenly all over Europe; who had (so they read and hear) his church with priest and pope, sacrifice and sevenfold sacrament, moral code and solemn liturgy. Nay, some actually hint that this god, whose birth was celebrated on December 25th, was born of a virgin-mother, while shepherds worshipped his nativity; and that a yearly festival commemorated his death and return to life.

It is not enough for us to say (what is true) that in all this there must be much insisting on what is conjectural as though it were certain; much colouring up of faint pagan analogies into exact parallels by the use of modern, technically religious language; much

sheer romance. All that is true ; but we must be able to show it. The solution, sufficient *for us*, of this and all other problems, given by our faith, will not convince an unbeliever.

We therefore hope that the reader will absolve us if we preface our description of the Mithraic cult, *as it became popular within the Roman Empire* (for there only it came to close quarters with Christianity), by a rather dull description of the sources which alone afford us knowledge of it (and it will be seen how poor they are), and by an inevitably tedious section on the gradual formation of the cult previous to its arrival in Europe. We trust that what follows will commend itself without further apology to the reader.

I

Authorities

Of direct ancient evidence we possess extraordinarily little. Of course, any of the sources of information as to ancient *Hindu*, and all stages of *Persian* religion, may be drawn upon, but their data are poor. Even the Syriac and Armenian literature, composed in the regions through which Mithraism passed on its way to Rome, is usually silent, or untrustworthy, or has perished. The "Acts" of Eastern Martyrs ignore, or ridicule, their pagan antagonists: nearly all the Oriental Christian controversial works known to have existed, which dealt with our subject, have been lost. But even here, of the two authors who dwell at all upon the Persian religion, Eliseus Vartabed and Eznig of Goghp (who flourished c. 450 A.D.), Eliseus certainly borrowed from Eznig, and Eznig himself most probably from the very popular writer, Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428 A.D.), whose work, *On the Magic in Persia*, was most certainly drawn from data supplied by *Magi* (or priests of Mithra and other Persian

deities) scattered through Asia Minor. Anyhow, these writers afford us only generalities, or else minute details difficult to classify or evaluate. Even Latin and Greek texts are but fragments surviving from an undoubtedly large mass of literature, the bulk of which has vanished with the vanishing worship, or has been deliberately destroyed by the victorious Christianity. A cult-title here, an anecdote there, a chance allusion, are the poor *débris* of whole libraries of research into the Eastern cult, composed by authors who were carried on the impulse of antiquarian enthusiasm inaugurated by Aristotle, and triumphant, in the third century B.C., at the learned Court of Alexandria. Greek writers tell us but little; and from the end of the first Christian century, what we possess comes chiefly from the West. And yet, as has been said, "the third century is of all centuries least known." From Tacitus to Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 120–390 A.D.), most historical work has perished. But this was precisely the epoch of the Mithraic triumph. Neo-Platonist philosophers, who manipulated the ritual and doctrines of this, as of other cults, for their own ends, and Christian Fathers, who were bitterly opposed to pagan worships, and often devoid, if not of fairness, at least of all historical sense, are the only sources left to us. The pagan polemical writer, Celsus (c. 200?), the careful antiquary and philosopher, Porphyrius (c. 250), and the mystic-minded Emperor, Julian the Apostate (who reigned from 361 to 363 A.D.), the three most celebrated pagan apologists, have more than others to tell us about Mithraism, though when Mithraists were converted to Christianity, they had no scruple, as Julian had, about revealing the secrets of the cult. Justin and Tertullian tell us most about the Mithraic initiation. Arnobius, in the third century, and Commodian, probably in the fifth, substitute polemical abuse for criticism; though the Ambrosiaster, in the fourth,

testifies to an already increasing ignorance concerning the dying cult. Firmicus Maternus and Lactantius are definitely untrustworthy. Jerome, for Rome, Socrates and Sozomen, for Alexandria, give us a few details of the final disintegration of Mithraism. In the sixth century Nonnus gave rein to his imagination, and wrote romantic horrors which won wide credence during all the middle ages.

It will be seen, even from this slight sketch, that *written tradition* will here have for us only such value as results from the help it gives us in interpreting the *Inscriptions* and *Monuments* which are, as a matter of fact, our principal and most generous sources of information. These are alike numerous—some 600 and 300 respectively. A full account of all of them is given in the epoch-making *Textes et Monuments Figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, by M. F. Cumont, professor at Ghent. So deeply in the debt of this well-known Belgian scholar all students of Mithraism are, and for an indefinitely long period will be, that it must be permitted to us once and for all to acknowledge our own debt; to confess that without the help of his book, this paper could not have been written; to stand absolved from specific declaration every time we are drawing on his stores of erudition and wise comment.

II

Gradual Formation of Mithraism

We must first very briefly trace the history of the Mithraic religion up to its definite entry into the Roman Empire.

We can watch the god approaching from those incredibly ancient times, before the dawn of history, when "the ancestors of the Persians were still united to those of the Hindus." And Mithra, worshipped once beside the broad streams of Ganges and in the bleak

uplands of distant Persia, travelled westward, only to find the conditions of his birthplace reproduced in the Babylonian plains which the Euphrates floods, and the savage mountain-fastnesses of Hither Asia. Only after that long journey through the centuries did he cross the barrier between East and West, and march, triumphant, across Europe.

At an extremely distant date the name Mitra occurs in the *Vedic hymns*, as that of a light-god connected with the sky, Varuna. (*Cf.* L. V. 3.) He is identical with the Mithra hymned in the *Avesta*, or the sacred books of PERSIA. The religion they contain is named Mazdean, after its chief god, Ahura-Mazda. In this system Mithra is the God of heavenly *Light*: he is neither sun, nor moon, nor stars, but they are his "1,000 ears and 10,000 eyes." Ever vigilant, omniscient, he becomes God of Truth and Witness of Oaths. His course is over the sky, but he is master, too, of earth, and gives increase and prosperity. He is friend of man, champion of Mazda, enemy of evil, and engaged in continual warfare with the powers of darkness, which are at first physically conceived, then spiritually and morally. The Zoroastrian theology, no doubt, gave to Mithra a far lower place under the supreme god Ahura-Mazda than did the older form of the Persian religion; but since Mithra's worship appears, in court and priestly circles, to have developed independently of the great reform of "Zarathustra," and only in this independently matured form to have been important in the Roman Empire, we are dispensed altogether from attempting to settle the date of the redaction of the Avesta (which M. Darmesteter puts as late as the Sassanid dynasty, *i.e.*, c. 226 A.D.!), and which present to us the Zoroastrian conception of the god. (*Cf.* p. 32 n.)

Under the Achæmenid kings (roughly 650–330 B.C.) Mithra held the position of active, emissary god, fighting on behalf of Ahura-Mazda, supreme and

serene, against the evil principle and his *devas*, or spirits. In popular religion he was of highest importance. Kings swear by him, invoke him before battle, receive from him the Hvarenô, the "glory," in its moral, and almost material sense, that makes a halo round a king. Nobles constantly bore his name. The seventh month was sacred to him; on his feast the king, according to Ctesias, had the privilege of getting drunk and dancing all by himself.[1] This feast was the occasion of extraordinary celebrations called the Mithrakana, and survived till modern times in the Mihragân of Mussulman Persia.

But at least by the time of Artaxerxes Ochus (359–338 B.C.), Mithraism had spread far beyond the Persian limits of the Persian Empire. In BABYLON, the winter residence of the sovereign, the Persian *magi* priests found themselves confronted with the highly organized and erudite Chaldean sacerdotal caste. Hence the Iranian nature-worship became thickly overlaid with Semitic astrological lore, and the old Persian cult took on a celestial symbolism which it never lost.

Now the *magi* had early swarmed into Armenia and Cappadocia, and indeed into ASIA MINOR generally. Some of their communities survived till the fifth century of our era. After the break-up of Alexander's Empire, the kings of the various divisions into which it then fell piqued themselves on all that connected them with ancient Persia, and hence preserved pre-eminence to the Persian cult, and (as their names, Mithridates, etc., prove) gave special honour to Mithra. Hence, in the chaos and confusion—political, social, and religious—which was provoked by the Macedonian conquest, while the old religion survived indeed, every force of Greek philosophy and Eastern theology was simultaneously brought to bear on it.

[1] This contradicts Herodotus I. 133. The Persian king was allowed to get drunk much oftener.

It was in Asia Minor, then, and at this period, that Mithraism took on its final characteristics. Not only are local deities assimilated to, or recognized in, the Persian gods, but the Asiatic rituals were adapted to, and possibly in part affected, the Iranian customs. Though the Iranian ideas were never wholly eclipsed by the Greek, yet Ahura-Mazda, for instance, was soon identified in popular parlance with the supreme sky-god Zeus, and Mithra (not quite accurately) with Helios (the sun), just as in Babylonia they had been connected with Bel and Shamash (sun) respectively.

The most important result of this final fusion was that the old Persian worship was now decked out with all the charm of Hellenistic art: almost certainly the type of Mithra the Bull-slayer was fixed by a sculptor of the Pergamum school in the second century B.C. Moreover, the Greek schools of philosophy, and particularly the Stoic, with its elaborate cosmological speculation, read into the old ceremonies, which (with the exception of the substitution of Greek, and, perhaps, even Latin, for the old liturgical language, Persian) were carefully preserved, sublime and cryptic meanings which they did not originally possess.

M. Cumont compares the religion as we here have it to a geological stratification. On the Iranian substratum of Mazdeism, Babylon has deposited a thick sediment of Semitic doctrine, mainly astrological. Asia Minor is responsible for yet deeper alluvial deposits, and in this fertile soil, Greek ideas run riot into a jungle which half hides the ground in which it grows.

Had Mithridates Eupator (120–63 B.C.), King of Pontus, realized his dreams, this complex religion, the "adequate expression of that complex civilization," would have become the State worship of an Asiatic Empire. He was, however, defeated by the Roman general, Pompey; the *débris* of his armies,

a gigantic host, propagated the old Iranian worship from various centres, especially the pirate headquarters in Cilicia, throughout the Roman Empire.

Expansion in the Roman Empire. — In the Roman Empire, says M. Cumont, Mithraism must have flashed into flame like a train of powder. Yet it followed clear and intelligible directions. The reason for its late appearance is its aloofness from the great centres of civilization. Sufficiently adaptable itself to be profoundly affected by the religions it met with, yet the philosophy and art of Greece and the strong theological systems of Syria and Egypt were not at all influenced by Mithraism. Greece especially modified it without taking or transmitting anything from it. So it was the gradual incorporation of the kingdoms of Asia Minor in the Roman Empire, and successive campaigns still further East, and the constant maintenance of three legions on the Euphrates, the levies of native troops, and the foundation of distant colonies, which knit West with East and opened a road for Eastern ideas and customs. Under the Flavians (c. 70–100) the scattered worshippers of Mithra first form coherent congregations; under the Antonines and Severi the cult spreads fast. Statius (c. 80) has seen a Mithraic chapel; inscriptions begin about 100 A.D. In 172 a chapel has already collapsed from old age. Wherever the army went, composed as it largely was of men who had served long in the East, or were themselves in origin Orientals, it took the cult with it. In the great military province of Dacia, and, in fact, all along the Danube and Rhine (the northern military frontiers of Rome) from Black Sea to Alps, and from Alps to Netherlands, Mithraic relics abound. In England the military posts of Isca (Caerleon), Deva (Chester), Eboracum (York), and especially the military centres around or along the great Wall from Tyne to Solway, are rich in remains. Every division of the Wall

seems to have had its chapel: among the storms and mists of the northernmost country known to Rome, Mithra was adored with the same rites as in the line of forts which stretched along the blazing limits of the Sahara. Two other vehicles of Mithraism were of extreme importance; they were the ubiquitous Eastern merchant and the Eastern slaves, transported into the European provinces in numbers which stagger the imagination. In consequence, not only all important *harbours*, such as Ostia, but all big *trading centres*, such as the cities on the Rhone, and again the immense estates belonging to nobles, to plutocrats, or to the State (for on these armies of slaves were kept at work) afford quantities of remains. The all but absolute barrenness of Greece in this respect (at the Peiræus harbour alone have relics been found) is further accounted for by the total lack in it of Roman soldiery and by its indigenous slave-population.

III. Doctrine

The Mithraic cult displays a mysterious figure whose problematical signification we must attempt to indicate, faded as its meaning and divergent as its interpretation may have been even in the period we are describing.

Kronos-Zervan.—At the head of all existence, human and divine, Iranian worship seems to have placed Infinite Time. So, at least (*Aeon*, *Saeculum*, etc.), may be named That which the Magi recognized as essentially ineffable, impassable, and undifferentiated. He produces and destroys and comprehends all things in heaven and earth. His extraordinary images are overlaid with an armour of symbols testifying to this universality of meaning and power. He is human, but usually sexless: his head is a lion's, marking Time's strength, most visible in destruction: while round him is spired a serpent, stamped with the signs of the zodiac, marking the oblique course of the year through

those signs. Four wings, growing from shoulders and hips, suggest the rapidity of time; in another order of ideas, the lion, serpent, and wings symbolized the elements of fire, earth, and air, while a bowl of water at the god's feet represented the fourth element in his creation. His hands hold the sceptre and the lightning of rule and destruction; and also two keys, with which he locks and unlocks heaven for the journey of the sun, and the ingress and egress of souls to heaven. All possible notions of sovereignty and power were read into these symbols, and their number was increased and their significance elaborated in proportion as this god (called Zervan in the pure Persian system) came into connection with the supreme deities of other systems, especially Semitic. Indeed, the full development of this weird image (which Greek artists strove to render less hideous) took place in Babylonia. This mysterious statue doubtless stood in all the places of Mithraic worship; but the only time it has been found in position, it is seen in a niche partially closed in front, peering, as it were, through a window. In one bas-relief this god is seen blowing upon a blazing altar placed at his feet, which is again shown in a Viennese carving. Since several of these statues have a kind of tube pierced from their open mouth to the back of their head, it is thought that air or even flames may actually have been forced through this on to the sacrificial embers before the statue. But this seems improbable.

THEOGONY.—It would be tedious to give, save in barest outline, the complicated cosmogony (or world-begetting) by which the Babylonianized Persians ended by accounting for the universe. It was, of course, represented as a theogony (god-begetting). Infinite Time engendered Heaven and Earth; from these sprang Ocean, their equal in power and divinity. From this sprang countless other gods, personified ideas or phenomena, elements or incidents of life.

Opposed to this celestial army was the realm and power of Darkness—Ahriman and his evil spirits, among the Persians. Powerless against heaven, they fight against mankind, and strive to make earth miserable.

In this warfare many divine heroes played a part, fighting against evil in the cause of God, and on behalf of men.

MITHRA.—Of these intermediaries Mithra became the chief. Not only, in his original character of god of *Diffused Light* did he gain the name of *Mesîtês* —Intermediate—in a physical and moral reference to the air-borne light *half-way between* ethereal heaven and base material earth (and in Babylon he was assimilated to the sun, who holds the *middle* place in the choir of planets), but we cannot be sure, from Plutarch's evidence, that this position became *moral*, or that the mediatorhood existed between the supreme, inaccessible God and suffering, sinful men. Then Greek philosophy, in particular, was fond of working out long analogies between the sun, giver of light, life, and intelligibility, and the supreme, unique Creator of all life, knowledge, and good, himself essential Being, Truth, and Good. Mithra's Babylonian connection with the *sun* naturally caused the Greeks to apply these categories to him, and in practice, at any rate, he assumed an always higher rank in popular religion, till his worship seems to have eclipsed altogether the vaguer and more abstract personality of the supreme Deity.

In this character as Intermediate and of sun-deity, Mithra had consecrated to him the 16th (middle-day of each month: he is represented between two youths in Persian dress, who are but special representations of himself—one raising, the other inverting, a blazing torch. Normally these figures were held respectively to represent the waxing and waning of the daylight; the central Mithra (of whom we shall speak in a moment) was the noonday sun.

BIRTH OF MITHRA.—The sun rising daily from the mountains was early mythologically represented as the Birth of Mithra from a stone; and in the temples the image of a conical rock was venerated, from which (usually) a naked child, wearing the Phrygian cap, was seen emerging. This birth will ultimately have been placed on December 25th, the winter solstice, when the sun enters on his career of increase, and when all solar cults joined in celebrating the *Natalis Solis Invicti*, or Birthday of the Unconquered Sun; *Invictus* was a title generally and appropriately attached to Mithra, the divine warrior. On the great ritual slabs, sculptured with the whole history of Mithra, the birth would appear to have taken place near a river, to have been secretly watched and sometimes openly worshipped by shepherds (recognized by their flocks and symbolical crook); after the birth the naked child betakes himself to a tree, though for what purpose [Cumont: to clothe himself with its leaves?] remains conjectural. Not only, we must remember, are these latter details the conjectural interpretations of emblematic sculptures of which we have no sure written contemporary account, but they presuppose much naïve illogicality in the sacerdotal tradition, which demands, as we shall see, the representation of shepherds and flocks before either men or beasts were created.[1]

[1] The incident of the shepherds is characteristic. Of course we possess relatively few ceremonial slabs, and many of these are fragmentary. Still, if the shepherds were of any marked importance, they should appear fairly frequently. As a matter of fact, shepherds are to be detected with certainty only seven times, Nos. 167, 168, 170, 171, 179, 188, 189, and even then can only be identified as shepherds by the sheep and ram sculptured near them, and once by the *pedum*, or shepherd's club, that they hold. Moreover, the birth of Mithra is often structurally separated from them, and placed in quite a different compartment of the sculptured framework. So most noticeably in 168 (where the shepherds are clearest), 188, and 189, where a thick border in relief divides the rock-born child from the two sheep and two watchers behind a rock. The shepherds cannot be said to be in a posture of adoration. They do not occur at all on the large and im-

MITHRA TAUROKTONOS.—Mithra then embarks upon his career of beneficent labour and effort. Here the legends grouped themselves around a primitive notion of sacrifice. This, in some places and at certain times at any rate, appears to have centred in the conviction that the divine life, circulating throughout a tribe and its possessions, existed most strongly in whatever was the main source of the tribe's prosperity —in the case of any essentially pastoral people, almost normally the *bull*. In all ordinary circumstances, accordingly, this creature would be regarded as sacred or divine: on certain extraordinary occasions, *i.e.*, on fixed solemnities, or whenever any special need of divine assistance was felt, the sacred animal would be solemnly slain, and all who ate or drank its flesh and blood would find the divine life renewed within them.

Accordingly we first see the bull, the first thing created by Ahura-Mazda, peaceably grazing in a field. Mithra flings himself upon him, seizes his horns, and is dragged after the infuriated animal until, exhausted, it sinks to its knees. Either at this moment, or later, Mithra drags it by its hind-legs to a cave. The supreme god sends his messenger, the crow, to say that the sacrifice must be accomplished. Mithra, therefore, kneeling on the bull's back, drawing back its muzzle with his left hand, plunges a dagger into the dying creature's flank.

portant slabs of Neuenheim, Osterburken, and Heddernheim, and the rock-birth is constantly depicted in isolation. If it can be said to occur in conjunction with any one piece of imagery rather than another, it is with a series consisting of an archer shooting (and in 164, 168, and 179, apparently checked by the comrade who often accompanies him); a figure crouching behind a rock; the sacred bull (*v. infra*) in its boat; the bull leaving, or in, a hut; a recumbent, sleeping figure; and then the birth, though even here it is separated often by some structural device from the preceding incidents. Indeed, we can scarcely believe that these subsidiary sculptures have any relation of order; if the shepherds are connected with the birth when they appear, it may really be not extravagant to detect here a reaction of Christian art on Mithraic imagery. The above references are to Cumont's *Textes et Monuments*, ii.

The universal creation or re-creation of life, due to the sacrifice of the bull, is extraordinarily symbolized by the germing, from the spinal marrow and blood of the bull, of all useful and salutary vegetation, especially wheat and the vine (wheat ears are seen springing from the creature's tail, and even, in one instance, issuing instead of blood from his wound). Evil animals, sent by Ahriman—the scorpion, the serpent, and the ant—strive to prevent this by drinking the flowing blood and by poisoning the source of the bull's productive power: uselessly, however; since from him were to spring, further, all useful and valuable animals, and his soul was to be assumed into the heavens whence he would protect the life of the farm and of the fields. After this, and after the creation (as it seems) of mankind, the race is forced through other trials inflicted by Evil, represented by a drought (from which Mithra, as a divine archer, delivers them by shooting at a rock, whence water gushes forth), and by a flood, upon which the sacred bull is seen floating in an ark. The meaning of the subsidiary pictures on the ritual slab is unusually obscure. That of the central incident is largely cleared up by extant literature: the drought and flood, etc., may with even greater probability be placed *before* the great sacrifice of the divine bull by Mithra; in which case its consequences will have been not so much the *giving* as the *restoring* of all good things to men; anyhow, all *detailed* explanation remains conjectural.

Triumph of Mithra.—At the end of this career of beneficence, Mithra leaves the earth in a chariot of flame driven by the Sun, after having sealed, probably in a religious banquet, the reconciliation effected between the opposing forces in the Universe.

Moral Interpretation of this Myth.—In this extraordinary mythological guise did reflection at first deck out the fundamental concepts and emotions (as sublime as they were obscure) of the

Iranian soul. A more refined philosophy constructed from them a further system of no little value.

From the beginning, as we saw, Mithra held the position of intermediary, of emanation from the Supreme God, sharing in his characteristics. He is Omnipotent and Supreme. He struggles against the ever-active Evil principle and finally vanquishes him, his beneficent work being symbolized in the painful sacrifice of the best thing in creation—best, because the fullest of divine life—from whose blood all good things spring.

But the struggle and sacrifice discernible in the Universe have their counterpart in the heart of man. It seems probable that not only an elaborate system of purification was in vogue, but that this was held to have an anterior analogate; and the abstinence from certain meats, and the absolute continence which some acknowledge in more fervent devotees, were recognized as the proper means for combating the evil principle everywhere and always active, and for winning to eternal happiness.

TITLES OF MITHRA. — Here and there we find applied to Mithra various titles expressive of his character of Helper of Men. The God very present; the giver of a harbour; an anchor to the soul; the Comrade, the Helper, the Companion; the Just, the Holy, the August. Always "youthful and inviolate," he is "ever wakeful," "on his guard," "never to be surprised"; hence "Unconquered and Unconquerable," and "Saviour."

ESCHATOLOGY.—The souls he helped were immortal—had, that is, existence both before and after their sojourn in the flesh. Into that flesh, the Chaldeans thought, they were plunged by a law of Necessity; or, according to Zoroastrian doctrine concerning some of them, they entered it voluntarily, to fight against the demons. After their deliverance from their tomb of flesh, the souls were fought for by

the celestial and infernal *devas;* if they had sinned, they were punished eternally or for a season in awful torments, or were carried through the spheres of the seven planets into the region of the fixed stars. This process was symbolically shown in the temples by a sort of ladder composed of seven doors, each of a different metal, and was itself a symbol of the progressive and final purification of the soul, since at each door it stripped itself of one human faculty or passion after another, until it entered, a naked essence, into the eternal light and truth of the god-head. As Mithra had presided at their original judgement, so he assisted souls up this difficult escalade, and welcomed them in their fatherland.

At the conclusion of a destined cycle of ages, Mithra was to reappear upon the earth, sacrifice once more a mysterious bull, give of its fat mingled with the juice of the Haôma plant to all men who were now to leave their tombs, recognize one another, and drinking, receive immortality in flesh as in spirit.

A devouring fire was then to fall from heaven and burn up all evil, men and demons alike, and the principle of all evil, Ahriman, himself.

We reserve our comments on this system, passing first to the *worship* and *practice* of the Mithraic religion, for, to understand a religious system, we must above all things make sure what it comes to be when *lived*; how men's minds assimilate it; while we repeat that M. Cumont will admit his account, not least of the Eschatology, to be composed of materials of varied source and value, to be largely conjectural, and a very doubtful representation of the beliefs of the ordinary Western Mithraist.

IV. Worship and Organization

There originally existed a considerable collection of liturgical literature connected with the Persian worship; unfortunately even the Greek translations

made in the Alexandrian epoch have perished—for Greek, mingled with Persian words recalling the origin of the liturgy and comparable to the Greek words in our own, remained the official language of the Mithraic cult. The ritual, however, was jealously guarded by the Asiatic and even Western *magi*, and marks off the Mithraic from every other worship.

INITIATION.—St. Jerome tells us that there were seven degrees of initiation, in which the adept [mystês] or consecrated person (*sacratus* is constant in the inscriptions) took successively the names of Crow (*corax*), Veiled (*cryphius*) [this is the almost certainly correct reading, and not *gryphus*, which would be translated Griffin ; nor *nymphius*, bridegroom], Soldier (*miles*), Lion (*leo*), Persian (*Perses*), Racer of the Sun (*helio-dromos*), and Father (*pater*). On certain occasions, doubtless at the initiation itself and the solemn religious meal, masks representing their grade were worn by the initiates, as we can judge by bas-reliefs and deduce from allusions in the Fathers. In the origin no doubt these sacred masquerades must be reduced to the general class of investiture with the skin of the sacred animal one has slain, thereby identifying one's self with it, and absorbing its life.[1] The later grades may have been developed to make up the sacred number seven.

We can say nothing of the meaning of the first grade, save that the Crow was the messenger of God, as the Mithraic slab proves. In many mysteries, Greek and others, the adept was covered with a large veil, or at least blindfolded. We see this painted on Greek vases, and Lucius, the Isiac initiate in Appuleius, is placed, dressed in sacred vestments, over the altar of Isis. Curtains, which at first concealed him, are then drawn, and he is revealed to the worshipping multitude. Something of this sort must have been the *Ostensio*, or Showing of the "Hidden"

[1] *Cf.* XIII. p. 11.

or "Veiled" Mithraic initiate, frequently mentioned on inscriptions. The rank of *Soldier* may have signified that the adept was to spend his life fighting in the holy warfare of the God against evil. It seems quite probable that a severe test—very likely a branding of some mark with a hot iron—marked this stage of initiation. Tertullian, who popularized the word *sacramentum, i.e.*, military oath, though attaching to it a vague and fluid sense, so calls this ceremony, in which the neophyte swore not to reveal the mysteries, and, on being presented with a garland on a sword, pushed aside the flowers, saying, "Mithra is my crown," and thereafter, like many of the earlier Christians, he refrained from all wearing of garlands or crowns on any occasion whatever.

Up to this point the devotees had been known as *Servants*: henceforward they are admitted into the rank of *Lion*, and are termed *Participators*. The duties of the next two classes are unknown: the *Fathers* directed the worship (*pater sacrorum* is a title of theirs); their colleagues were "fellow-consecrated" (*co-sacranei*) and "Brothers," a regular term for the members of all sorts of pagan confraternities. The Fathers themselves were governed by the *Pater Patrum*, Father of Fathers, whose office seems to have been held for life, and whose seat was almost certainly always at Rome. Admission to the lower ranks could be conferred on children, and was called *Acceptio*, a name given by Christians to Baptism; the admission to the higher grades was *Traditio*, "Conferring," another Christian word.

ABLUTIONS.—Either at the outset, or repeatedly, neophytes were dipped in pure water, an ablution promising the expiation of all sin, as Tertullian tells us. Honey was placed on the hands and tongue of the Lion, and also of the Persian; honey, used by the Egyptians for embalming dead bodies, here symbolized a preservative from moral offence. The drink of

milk and honey presented to Christian neophytes has no original connection with this. (*Cf.* Tert., *adv. Marcion.*, iii. 16.)

THE SACRED FEAST.—Probably only after the grade of Lions had been reached, the neophyte was admitted to the banquet of bread and water; so the Western evidence. It is conjectured that wine was mingled with it, replacing the original Persian drink of Haôma-juice. The Persians attributed to the drinking of Haôma-juice prosperity in this life, also an eternal bliss. Long and severe abstinence, and various tests of which the number and nature are obscure, but which certainly included dramatic representations of suffering and torment calculated to try the nerves of the initiate, preceded these privileges.

MITHRAIC CRYPTS.—The place in which these rites were celebrated was itself peculiar. After the vestibule had been passed, you descended into a long and narrow crypt or grotto. Raised masonry platforms, some four feet broad by two or three high, ran down the two sides, leaving a narrow passage between. On these platforms the worshippers doubtless stationed themselves, very likely kneeling, and in the dark. At the entrance, a bowl (in one case a large conch-shell) of sacred water stood. The platforms left the further end of the crypt free; and within a railed-off space the priests performed their sacrifices in the light of numerous lamps, and in some cases, to judge by the finds, to the sound of flutes and bells. The weird image of Eternal Time peered from its recess, spouting flame, possibly, from its jaws. Mysterious devices were painted on floor and wall, understood by few only of those present. Invariably, at the back, over the altar, stood a large slab bearing the bas-relief of Mithra slaying the bull, with mystical figures on either side. This was apparently unveiled at a climax in the ceremony; in more than one case, it seems to have swung round on a pivot, revealing on

its reverse the picture of Mithra and the Sun-god, standing reconciled and triumphant over the dead bull.

WORSHIP.—It seems likely that service was celebrated thrice daily, while at other times special sacrifices of animals, and long chants, were performed by priests in archaic Persian dress. Special service seems to have been daily performed in honour of the Planet of the day; the Sunday (Sun's day) was peculiarly observed. Probably the 16th of each month was still sacred to Mithra; we have already mentioned the peculiar honour attached to December 25th.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORSHIPPERS. — The Mithraic congregations had an official organization and legal status. They had special business representatives, registers, councils, and special boards: they had special lawyers and public protectors, and were in fact religious *sodalicia* fully *en règle*. The accounts of several assemblies survive. Large donations (as of ground for building, materials for the heavier constructions, &c.) are seen side by side with small contributions (as of lamps, &c.) or gifts which several adepts had joined in giving. Funeral dispositions were a matter for great anxiety and care. The narrow dimensions of the crypts prove that the individual congregations were small. Hence many such crypts may coexist close to one another. Within these congregations class-distinctions were obliterated, and the slave is sometimes found holding a higher office than does one by far his superior socially. It seems, however, fairly certain that women were excluded from any direct share in the initiation, its ceremonies and privileges.[1]

[1] Though Mithraism formed a rallying point for the spiritual efforts of dying paganism, it is idle to pretend that it could ever have been the dominant European faith—as Renan would have it,—had Christianity "been checked in its growth" (its exclusion of women from the mysteries was itself enough to make that impossible); and it is impossible, even, to affirm that under the Severi themselves its adepts outnumbered the Christians. For not only is it very difficult to evaluate

"SYNCRETISM." — Before commenting upon this religion, we must briefly refer to the position it held in relation to the other contemporary worships popular in the Roman Empire.

In the second and third and fourth Christian centuries, cosmopolitan civilization, and the "clash of creeds," rituals, and philosophies, were provoking a certain wide tolerance of all expressions of the religious need innate in all men. Under the most varied forms very much the same tendencies were detected — a belief in God, one, perfect, and transcendent, with whom man could and must enter into communication in this life, if he were to live pure and with prospect of a happy eternity. Different nations, epochs, schools clothed this God in different human guises, honourable and true in so far as they rendered Him discernible to human powers; and venerated Him in different ways, all justifiable in proportion as they gave men access to Him, and helped them to live well, or at least to get rid of their offences.

In consequence, the same supreme deity was recognizable under many different names, or, at any rate, the devotee of one god would detect his celestial patron in the recipients of worship not that of his own sect. Thus in the fourth century, the "Father of Fathers" himself can be priest of the most varied temples: on the Danube, Mithraism colours the local cults: along the Rhine, local deities, on the other

the percentage of Christians at this epoch in the Empire, but (unless we assume the total disappearance of numerous Mithraic crypts) we can calculate that Ostia, the important harbour and Mithraic centre, even if its five crypts had their maximum of worshippers, and were in simultaneous use, cannot have had more than 500 adepts; Aquincum and Apulum, notable military stations, have four Mithrea each, 400 Mithraists, that is, apiece; Heddernheim and Friedberg, though important stations, three Mithrea only. But of course the general influence of the cult will have far outstripped those who were in a primary sense Mithraists, and the worshipper of almost any other god may easily have included Mithra in his invocations.

hand, enter Mithraic temples. In Phrygia the parallel worship of the Persian Anâhita caused the local pair, Attis and Cybele, to be regarded as the equivalents of Mithra and Anâhita; and indeed the cult of the *Magna Mater*, Cybele, appears to have flourished side by side with Mithra's, and to have been especially favoured by his priests, partly because the Mithraic worship then entered tacitly under the sanction accorded to that of Cybele by the State, and partly because women could share in the Cybele mysteries—we find the grade of *Mothers* there, and the female devotees were called *Sisters*; moreover, the cult of Cybele itself received new life from this new connection, and in all probability it was from the cult of Anâhita that the sacrifice of the Taurobolium, the bath of regenerative bull's blood, came into the worship of Cybele.

We have no space in which to dwell upon the triumph of solar monotheism in which Paganism ended. In proportion as Mithra came in contact with Greek philosophy, his solar character became accentuated, and he was merged, like so many other deities, in a vague but glorious Pantheism. Already under Constantine Christianity was demanding the abolition of pagan worships. A brief but violent reaction in favour of the old cults took place under the Emperor Julian: the people followed the example of the court: at Alexandria, in 361, the pagan populace, excited, partly, by the "desecration" of a Mithraic crypt by the Christians, violently murdered the Arian bishop George. But Julian perished: accusations of magic and illegal practices made the position of the *magi* officially untenable. In 371, a fictitious plot was discovered in which they were seriously implicated. A series of magisterial edicts attacked the Mithraists directly: crypts were destroyed: at Rome, in 377, the prefect Gracchus prided himself on his devastation of a Mithraic

sanctuary as a proof of his eagerness to obtain baptism. The *magi*, panic-stricken, walled up their crypts and buried their sacred things.

The victory of Theodosius (394) ruined the last hopes of the aristocratic reaction. In the country-places and mountain-fastnesses of Europe, and longer in its native East, the cult maintained a decadent activity. In Europe it survived only in its effects, noticeable chiefly, if not only, in heretical sects, Gnostic and Manichæan; though, as some have maintained, its influence affected Christianity itself.

To its relation, therefore, to Christianity we now must turn.

V

Relation of Mithraism to Christianity

Many Christian Fathers believed that the devil had utilized Old Testament prophecies to travesty or anticipate Christian mysteries in alien systems, and thus to prevent conversions and bewilder the faithful. Justin Martyr (c. 150 A.D.) says[1] that bad demons, in the Mithraic sacred feast of bread and water, imitate the Eucharist. The Mithraic Birth from the Rock, and "tradition" of the mysteries in a grotto, are diabolic inventions based on Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's birth in a cave;[2] Tertullian (c. 200) compares the initiatory laver of Isis and Mithra to Christian baptism.[3] In *The Crown*[4] he bids Christ's soldiers blush: not Christ alone, but Mithra, can condemn them, by the example of the fervent Mithraist's rejection of the crown offered to him in the *Soldier* ceremony. In *The Prescription of Heretics*,[5] he says:

"Heresies are inspired by the devil, of course, whose rôle is to invert the truth, and who actually seeks to

[1] *Apology*, i. [2] C. Trypho, 70 and 78. [3] *On Baptism*, c. 5.
[4] C. 15. [5] C. 40.

rival, in the mysteries of idols, the very matter of the Divine Sacraments. There are those whom he too dips, his believers, no doubt, and his faithful; he promises them expiation of their sins from a Laver; and, if I remember right, Mithra there signs his soldiers on their foreheads, and celebrates an oblation of bread, and puts forth a mimicry of the resurrection, and binds a crown beneath a sword. What again of his establishing a supreme pontiff of one marriage only? He has his virgins too, and his celibates."

Quotations might be multiplied. St. Augustine[1] tells of a priest who could assume such similarities of cult as to risk declaring (of Attis probably, but quite possibly of Mithra, since both gods wore the Phrygian cap) that "The Capped One is himself a Christian!" Points of seeming contact are, we think, theological, eschatological, mythological, economic, ascetic, and artistic. Some of those alleged are explained in the following paragraph, and we shall criticize them below in the inverse order.

God is supreme, infinite, all-holy, Creator, inaccessible, and yet the goal of man's sinful soul. By the interposition of Mithra, the gulf is bridged. Eternal ruin might be escaped, eternal felicity secured, purgatorial pains indefinitely shortened, by participation in the mysteries of this God, born a child on the mountains amid adoring shepherds, author of a painful sacrifice whence flowed all good for man, who had drawn water from the rock for thirsting humanity, who had been taken up to reign in still beneficent triumph with the Supreme Divinity. His seven grades of initiation included a "baptism"; a painful admission into the "sacred militia" of the God, and a mystic meal, with eternal import, of sacred bread and wine and water. An organized clergy, under a supreme Father, and including celibate devotees, governed this

[1] Tract on John; vii.

worship, celebrated frequent daily offices among lights and mystic symbols, and, clad in religious vestments, chanted an ancient liturgy from sacred books. Penance, purity, and social brotherhood were preached. Verbal coincidences in titles, names of rites, &c., will probably prove even more numerous, as from papyri, &c., we learn more and more of the popular or devotional language of the first Christian centuries.

Before we criticize the similarities, we will point out one great difference between the cults, which has at once attracted the attention of the foremost authorities in this matter, and which by itself should be enough to prove to anyone that Christianity, in its lonely purity, is essentially and for all time sundered from its contemporary worships, and is inspired by a Spirit which sets the historic Personality of its Founder in a place which no god, nor hero, nor prophet of any pagan worship can hope to share.

Professor Dill (a witness not partial to Catholicism) speaks in his *Roman Society from Nero to Aurelius*,[1] of the "futile attempts . . . . to find parallels to Biblical narrative or symbolism in the faint and faded legend of Mithra recovered from the monuments. The one great weakness of Mithraism lay precisely here—that in place of a Divine life instinct with human sympathy, it had only to offer the cold symbolism of a cosmic legend"; moreover, "the two systems were separated by an impassable gulf." Mithra was doomed to "inevitable defeat." He "remained inextricably linked with the nature-worship of the past. And, with such associations, even the God of Light could not be lord of the spiritual future of humanity. . . . The Christian Church might, in St. Augustine's phrase, 'spoil the Egyptians,' it might borrow and adapt rites and symbols from pagan temples, or ideas from Greek philosophy. But in borrowing, it transfigured them. In all that was

[1] Pp. 622, &c.

essential, the Church would hold no truce with paganism. 'Break the idols and consecrate the temples,' was the motto of the great Pontiff. But Mithra was ready to shelter the idols under his purer faith." Professor Cumont insists on the same fatal tolerance, which at first sight seemed destined to ensure the permanence of a cult, that demanded the sacrifice of their religious customs from none of its adepts, just as the rigid intolerance of Christianity, provocative of persecutions, seemed to ensure the obliteration of the worship. The contrary took place in both cases. The very adaptability of Mithraism, says M. Cumont, "prevented it from shaking itself free from the gross or ridiculous superstitions which complicated its ritual and theology; it was involved, in spite of its austerity, in a questionable alliance with the orgiastic cult of the mistress of Attis [Cybele], and was obliged to drag behind it all the weight of a chimerical or hateful past. The triumph of Roman Mazdeism would not only have ensured the perpetuity of all the aberrations of pagan mysticism, but of the erroneous physical science on which its dogma was based." Christianity, he points out, from its origin was emancipated from the immoralities of past religions, and the follies of past scientific systems: it stood on its own merits, lived by its own spirit; survived, nay, flourished, in the persecutions at the first touch of which Mithraism perished, since it was unfit to survive.

Dom Leclercq, in his masterly *Manuel d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, affirms that only in art can Mithraism be shown in detail to have influenced Christian usage. M. Cumont is in agreement with him, though suggesting that this artistic influence was rather wider than Dom Leclercq allows. Dom Leclercq contends that only the representations of the assumption of Elias were modelled on Mithraic work—in this case, on the triumph of Mithra. Mithra drawing water from

the rock with his bow, and Moses with his rod, need have no artistic relation. The Mithraic banquet, or Persian cap, or god-borne bull cannot be shown to have influenced Christian paintings of the heavenly feast, the Magi, or the Good Shepherd. This last type was indeed (artistically) from a non-Christian source—sculptures, *e.g.*, of Aristeas, &c.; and not only did Christian artists naturally tend to follow current types, but, within the traditional and largely symbolical categories of ancient art, not much originality was possible to them. Even so, *Mithraic* influence is very slight.

A Mithraic "ethic" and asceticism has been spoken of as a rival, if not the equal, of the Christian code. Certainly no conclusive evidence has ever been brought against the purity of the Mithraic cult. No doubt, too, it entered into the general category of dualistic systems (always prevalent in the East, and, at the Christian era, influencing European thought and practice), which set the Evil against the Pure principle, and told the soul to conquer in the fight by abstinence (total or partial; perpetual or temporary) from marriage and from certain meats. Hence Mithra may well have had his "celibates." Still, the only direct evidence for this is the passage from Tertullian quoted above. But this passage is ambiguous. Not only do we nowhere else find the *Pater Patrum* called by the Roman title *Summus Pontifex*, and everywhere find indications that women (and *à fortiori* a special class of sacred virgins) were never to be found in Mithraic initiation; but, grammatically, the "he," whose possessions pontiff and celibates are said to be, may well be the *devil* and not Mithra at all, and if (with the latest editors) we resume a variant reading and couple "Mithra" with the preceding clause ["if I remember Mithra aright"] *diabolus*—"the devil," will be the subject of every verb in the passage. Finally, Tertullian everywhere

else uses "Supreme Pontiff," to betoken the Roman official, to whom indeed re-marriage was forbidden. This passage, therefore, *may* not connect continence with Mithraism at all. The Persian worship stressed the value of truthfulness, more perhaps than did other contemporary systems,—not, perhaps, than the ancient Roman: but the hardy virtues (which endeared it to the soldiers) and the religious equality are scarcely more remarkable in it than elsewhere, at any rate at this epoch; and in no case have we evidence for a true code or system of ethics, or any trace (historically verifiable) of moral effort or ideal which can bear any relation to the Christian save that of a will-o'-the-wisp to the noonday sun.[1]

"Mithraic sacrament" is a misnomer. If at all costs an analogate is to be found, the seven grades of initiation may be compared to the seven "orders" bestowed by the Church, or, still better, to the grades of ritual initiation in Freemasonry. Only the mystic value of numbers (here, seven) did both organizations inherit from their Semitic past. Gradual initiation, with proportionate privileges and duties, is common to most, especially Oriental, cults; but mutual influence is here undiscoverable. Ablution, significant of moral purification, is symbolism natural to all minds alike; M. Cumont[2] shows how the conception of the spiritual life as a divine warfare originates in, and is worked out by, quite independent systems. In organizing a "clergy," Mithra only did what all who aim at continuity for their system would do, and what his Oriental contemporaries did. Even the sacred and sanctifying meal of simple elements enters into the wide category of similar

[1] This absence of clear code, and, still more, of any system of dogma, is what, more than anything else, perhaps, marks off the Mithraic and, indeed, every pagan religion, from the uncompromising Christian scheme.

[2] *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, p. xiii. *seq.*, 1906.

sacrificial feasts,[1] betokening a natural, though mystic, tendency towards identical expression of social and religious union. Devotionally, we may no doubt admire how wholly suited to human nature the ordinances of Christ's supernatural religion are; how widely and mercifully true it is that Christianity (and not alone the Sabbath) was made for man; but, historically, we shall have no temptation, because no sort of evidence, to trace a causal connection between the rites of Mithra and the economy of the Church. Our language must, therefore, be very guarded.

We may speak [says M. Cumont][2] of a "Supper of Mithra and his companions," but only as we might say "the vassal princes of the Empire," or "the socialism of Diocletian." It is a literary artifice meant to bring out an analogy, or "indicate a parallel in a vivid but approximate style."

As for the "coincidences" of Mithra's history with the Gospels, M. Cumont, with unusual caution, declares[3] that an account of either history which makes it noticeably parallel to the other must be a caricature. At the outset, all the incidents of Mithra's career are as obviously symbolical as those of the Gospel are historical.[4] To us personally, the adoring shepherds have always seemed the most striking or picturesque approximation. But even they, it will be remembered,

[1] M. Gasquet, *Essai sur le Culte et les Mystères de Mithra*, 1899, says, p. 84, that in the Mithraic meal we may trace, with the Christian Communion, a very remote analogy, and by no means any equivalence. And, p. 85, that the rites enshrine quite different religious significations.

[2] *Ibid*, p. xii.

[3] *Textes et Monuments*, i. 342.

[4] We may be permitted to refer to an article in the *Month* for December 1908 (from the October and November numbers of which this paper has, by the kind permission of the Editor, been reprinted) for a refutation of the assertions that Mithra was virgin-born, and that a yearly feast of death and resurrection was celebrated in his honour. The sole evidence for this latter notion is a mutilated fragment of that untrustworthy writer, Firmicus Maternus, which does not even mention Mithra. M. Cumont writes, with great kindness, assuring us of the complete accuracy of these conclusions.

are but the conjectural explanation of a symbolical sculpture not always found in any obvious relation to the Mithraic birth. Some comparisons do but reflect discredit on their author. Professor Gurlitt compares the incident of Mithra dragging after him the dead (or doomed) bull [a very ancient astrological device] to the Way of the Cross: Mr. Mallock finds a parallel to our hosts in the *cross-stamped* loaves of the Mithraic banquet, knowing quite well that most large round loaves in antiquity were so notched, that they might easily be broken into quarters.

Even those general conceptions concerning the nature of God and the destiny of the soul in which Mithraism seems to approximate to Christian doctrine, do not in any way outstrip the known possibilities of human reason. Natural reason can tell us much about God and the soul: the conscience everywhere recognizes a moral law with its sanctions. But nothing can show the cults to have interacted. Indeed, not only were Christianity and Mithraism formed apart, but they spread along different lines. Christianity, coming from Palestine—a region unaffected by Mithraic influences—travelled by way of Jewish colonies, along the Mediterranean coasts, in the big towns. Practically nothing of Roman Mithraism has been found in Asia Minor and Syria, where Christianity first triumphed. The Persian god moved where social and political forces had prepared his way, by the military frontiers (Christians at first shunned the army) and the great trade-routes. When Christianity and Mithraism faced one another as serious rivals—in Rome especially, or large ports like Ostia, all will, I think, agree that Mithraism was fully developed, and very few, if any, will now maintain that Christianity had not, by then, developed her main forms of cult and doctrine, or treated the notion of alien contamination with anything but abhorrence. Moreover, the history of the Jewish Church is now

so well known, and, to any unbiassed judge, the origins of Christianity are so irrefutably focussed in the person of our Lord Himself, that it becomes wholly gratuitous and arbitrary to suppose an indefinitely distant ancestor from which Mithraism and Christianity alike descend.[1]

Our comment on Mithraism may be brief. Originally a dualistic nature-worship of a simple description, by the time it reached the Roman Empire it was overlaid with Babylonian astrological symbolism and connected with the wilder nature-cults of Asia. The cryptic symbolism no doubt attracted the devout curiosity of those not yet initiated; but the astrological influences were mainly bad, for they developed a fatalistic belief in the power of the stars, and a superstitious medley of devices for eluding their influence. The Asiatic connection was wholly bad, or would have been, had it been more than theoretical. Mithraism, however, never degenerated beyond a certain point. The worst Asiatic features are never found in it. In the midst of all this, certain noble and rudimentary conceptions of natural theology and morality were safeguarded: religious emotion was fostered to a very remarkable extent, yet in a generally virile way. In the great influx of Oriental worships which marked the second century of our era, Mithra became popular, partly because of the uncompromising and ascetical nucleus in his worship, though its connection with less edifying worships, *e.g.* Cybele's, rather neutralizes this, —and partly because in the general decay of cult and morals and philosophies, it found nothing, at any rate, to resist it. We have no data to judge of the number of its adepts, absolutely or relatively, for the relative multiplicity of its relics is largely due, one cannot but surmise, to the particularly good chance of preservation which the underground worship assured to them.

[1] We may refer the reader to Lectures 17, *Hebrew Bible*, Rev. G. Hitchcock; and 19, *Early Church*, Rev. C. Lattey: *passim*.

We cannot tell what the future may bring forth. So far, the positive information we can glean, coupled with our knowledge of Jewish and early Christian history, forbids our finding any essential connection on the static side, so to speak, between Mithraism and Christianity; while dynamically, the religious force of Mithraism is such, that at its best it but emphasizes the unique value of that revelation of God in Christ which the Church, in His Name, has carried on.[1]

[1] On the use and abuse of the Avesta (*cf.* p. 5) in the study of Roman Mithraism, *cf.* Cumont, *T. et M.*, I., i., especially pp. 11, 12. Clearly we cannot here discuss this crucial point. See, too, Lect. X., *Zoroastrianism*. We have in this paper insisted on the *likenesses* asserted between Christianity and Mithraism. It would be the easiest of tasks to develop the radical and ubiquitous differences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

We regret that we know of no English book which treats of Mithraism in a way which may satisfy without misleading the general reader. We must refer him to—

F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments Illustrés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*. Brussels, vol. i., 1899; vol. ii., 1896. *Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, c. 6. Paris, 1906.

P. Allard, *Paganisme Romain au IVe Siècle* (*Revue des questions historiques*, 1892), p. 357 *seq.*

S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, especially the last chapter.

We are also glad to refer to the Rev. W. St C. Tisdall's *Mythic Christs and the True*, c. i., published by the North London Christian Evidence League.

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE LIBRARY
0 7000 002 57[illegible]6

DATE DUE

DATE DUE

DEMCO 38-297

31298
v.2